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THE POPE AND THE CARDINAL

ON Monday night the *Osservatore Romano*, official organ of the Vatican, issued a statement about the trial of Cardinal Mindszenty, which made nonsense of its own former attitude and of thousands of words which had been written and spoken in innumerable papers and pulpits. Repudiating its former view that the Cardinal had by foul means been reduced to composing a false and shameful confession, it said that it was now possible "to take an objective and truthful view" of the trial and that the Cardinal had chosen "the way of justice and honour. He admitted what was true and denied what was false." In brief, the Cardinal, speaking without coercion, was right in telling the Court that he was guilty "in principle" of the charges against him, while he repudiated the theory, fathered upon him by Cardinal Spellman, that in a Communist country loyalty to the Church demands treason to the State. If this Vatican statement had been issued a few hours earlier, it would have been impossible for leaders of the Catholic Church in England to utter the violent words that were heard in the Albert Hall on the same night, or for Mr. Bevin, as Foreign Secretary, to take the surely unprecedented course of sending a message to be read from the platform in which he said that it was not Cardinal Mindszenty but the Hungarian Government which was on trial.

The Vatican statement has caused great confusion in the ranks of Catholic propagandists, who have now to substitute a very reasonable protest against the life sentence passed on the Cardinal for their former irresponsible denunciations of the whole trial. Yet it is not difficult to find an explanation of the Vatican's change of mind. In the first place, the course of the trial and the conduct of the Cardinal had falsified the stories of drugs and torture which, it may be remembered, were put forward, not on the basis of any evidence, but as prophecies about what Communists in Budapest might do to a Cardinal. They were repeated so often that people began to forget—what was the fact—that *The Tablet,* which gave these stories currency in this country, had merely said that such drugs were likely to be administered. We do not suggest that the Government of Hungary would not, if it suited them, resort to methods of prolonged interrogation under conditions designed ultimately to break down the resistance of the toughest prisoner. Such methods might result in the accused agreeing to sign any document put before him and afterward answering in the affirmative when questioned about the accuracy of the confession in open court. We do suggest, however, that no combination of drugs, torture, cajolery or promises could first break down the resistance of a man like Cardinal Mindszenty, and then induce him to stand up and make a public and straightforward statement which was contrary to the truth, subversive of the doctrines and wishes of the Church and destructive of his own honour and reputation. Even if extreme Communist cunning might on some occasion and with some men produce such a result, we cannot imagine a Government, staking much on the political success of the trial, running the risk that the Cardinal would not recover his courage when faced with his adherents in the presence of friendly representatives of the world's press including, it should be noticed, not only Communists, but well-known reporters working for the great American news agencies. These correspondents have emphatically stated that they were able fully to report the trial and transmit their reports without censorship. It must have been clear to the Vatican that even if it were to the advantage of the Church to represent the Cardinal as the victim of drugs and torture, such an interpretation of the trial would not be widely believed.

We suggest that the most likely explanation is that which the Vatican puts forward. The Cardinal's statement was an admission of which the Church has no reason to be ashamed. Few people seem to have tried honestly to appraise the documents produced by the Hungarian Government. Yet none of the accused have disputed their accuracy; the facsimile in the Cardinal's handwriting is not denied by the Vatican, and it seems inherently probable that such a correspondence did in fact take place and that such illegal currency transactions with the United States were carried out. In 1947, when most of these events are said to have occurred, the Cardinal would have felt fully justified in maintaining a close relation with the American authorities, who certainly included men who actively worked against the then unstable and only partially Communist-dominated Government. At the same time, the Cardinal, while admitting that he was constrained at this period to break the law and to come into conflict with the State, declared that he did not hold it to be the Church's duty to be at war with the State; and justified himself for doing all he could to maintain the Church's control over education and youth organisation, and to secure a daily newspaper for the Catholic faith. It was no doubt because of his powerful and outspoken opposition of these matters that he was arrested.

Whether any special means of interrogation was necessary to induce the Cardinal to make these admissions we do not know, nor is it any more than guesswork to suppose, as some have done, that the Cardinal had actually been informed that he would be carrying out the wishes of the Vatican in making this public confession. It seems clear, however, that both the Pope and the Cardinal decided to reject the only alternative course of procedure. Cardinal Spellman, who perhaps has less influence in Rome than he and the world used to imagine, declared that if "to deny allegiance to an atheistic Communist government" is treason, "then, thank God, Cardinal Mindszenty confessed to treason." In fact, Mindszenty seems not to have confessed to treason. What Cardinal Spellman's argument amounts to is that in an atheistic State the Church has as a duty to plot and intrigue against the civil authority. Such doctrine would make an honourable basis for martyrdom if the Vatican considered it advisable. But Rome has long experience of quarrelling with civil authorities, and has built up a great body of casuistry laying down the conditions under which it is expedient for the Church openly to challenge the authority of the State on the ground that it is right to obey God rather than men. Such conditions, the Vatican appears to have decided, are not present in Eastern Europe to-day. Rome is not confronted with unstable governments which it can hope now to overthrow; believing as it does that the Church must eventually emerge victorious, it may well hold that it should bide its time. The Vatican is aware, though many foreign Catholics seem not to be, that in predominantly Catholic countries like Poland and Hungary, Communism does not, in fact, to-day persecute the faith or interfere with worship or the functions of the priest. What it has done is to destroy the immense and unjustifiable wealth of the Church, to distribute its great estates, and begin the process (long ago completed in the Western world) of secularising education and undermining by a variety of means the political influence by the Church. A totalitarian State which has rid itself of all rival political parties and ended free criticism cannot stomach a "turbulent priest" owing allegiance to the external political authority of Rome. Thus the two great totalitarian systems meet and wrestle together; the stakes are both political power and the control of the minds of great populations. The case of Cardinal Mindszenty is an incident in a new *Kulturkampf;* whether the next stage is to be renewed battle or a period of compromise leading conceivably to a Concordat remains to be seen.

Norway's Dilemma

The Norwegian decision to break away from Sweden and Denmark and to investigate further the implications of the North Atlantic Pact is probably prompted by memories of 1940. Neutrality then, though it successfully protected Sweden, left Norway open to a sudden, brilliantly executed, *blitzkreig*. Whereas other neutrals—Belgium and Denmark, for instance—were anyway indefensible, if Germany once decided to attack them, Norway was not. Indeed, if her defence plans had been fully co-ordinated with those of Britain, she might well have been spared the horrors of German occupation. Such considerations must weigh heavily with the Norwegian Government in considering its reply to the latest Russian offer of a non-aggression pact. Such a pact would, of course, be a mere formality: no action whatsoever would follow from it by either signatory. But adhesion to the North Atlantic Pact would eventually mean the complete integration of Norway in Anglo-American naval strategy, which in this area is chiefly concerned to anticipate the dangers of a Russian submarine campaign from Baltic bases. This is the real difficulty of Norway's position: she has no halfway house between complete subordination to Anglo-American defence plans and militarily impotent neutrality on the Swedish model.

Going Down?

The break in U.S. share and grain markets is only one of several signs that the U.S. boom has passed its peak. Prices, both wholesale and retail, have been dropping steadily for some weeks, and merchants have shown their anxiety about accumulated inventories by extended bargain sales and a reduction in forward orders. The American consumer is certainly pleased to see a drop of several points in the cost-of-living index, but this pleasure is tempered with some anxiety. More than 700,000 workers lost their jobs during January—reducing the employed labour force to a total of 57,500,000. Since employment had reached a peak of 61,500,000 during the summer, more than three million people are now out of work. Part of this decline is due to seasonal fluctuation (many take jobs in the summer who may be students or housewives the rest of the year), and part of it represents workers who are going out of industry—women perhaps to marry, men to retire. But unemployment is clearly growing fast enough to cause uneasiness.

Reactions on Europe

If this process continues, it is probable that both Congress and the business community will become more interested in European Aid as a stimulus to the American economy than as a measure of foreign reconstruction. This, of course, would produce a sharp change in emphasis. Already, the shipping interests have persuaded the House Maritime Committee unanimously to approve the Bland-Magnuson Bill, which seeks to extend the proportion of Marshall Aid carried in American bottoms by insisting that the "fifty per cent. rule" shall be applied to "off-shore" purchases and to each country separately, rather than to the Nineteen as a whole. The oil companies, in turn, are concerned about the allocation of aid for the construction of refineries in Europe, which could be a very considerable nuisance if trade falls off. Other industries are likely to follow these leads. They want the Federal Government to keep the floor under the economy, by spending on armaments and other "legitimate" objects. But they are not at all sure what course to follow if the downward trend continues. It is significant that Mr. Truman last week argued for a "planned economy" to meet "situations before they really develop into disaster." While the President did not define his idea of planning—except to distinguish it from totalitarian control—his words reveal a new note in the thinking of America. The boom has ceased to be a headache: the problem now is to avoid a hangover.

Mr. Truman's Labour Law

The first instalment of President Truman's programme has been sent to Congress. The new Labour Bill, as he promised, kills the Taft-Hartley Act and gives the trade unions more than they had hoped. It removes the ban on the closed shop, on strikes by Government employees and on the use of union funds for political purposes. American labour especially resented the Taft-Hartley provision for the use of the injunction in trade disputes—a weapon of the employers which has been eliminated from the new Bill, together with the demand that union officials file non-Communist affidavits, and the liability of unions for "unfair" labour practices. While the new Bill retains the restrictions on jurisdictional strikes and on "unfair" behaviour by employers—such as the refusal to bargain with a union or the victimisation of workers for union activity—it has abolished, at the direct request of the union leaders, the President's powers to secure federal injunctions in strikes which "affect the national welfare." The President used these powers seven times in the last two years, notably against the Railroad Brotherhoods and the Mineworkers. At hearings in the Senate Labour Committee Mr. Taft protested strongly that the United States will be left defenceless if the President has no power to curb strikes critically affecting the welfare of the nation, although Mr. Truman claims—to many people's surprise—that such powers are inherent in his office without specific legislation. The Bill certainly will not pass either House without modifications, for there is still a majority in Congress of those who voted the penal Taft-Hartley Act over the President's veto. The re-insertion of the non-Communist affidavit is only one of many clauses that may creep back into the new law. But the President has put himself on the record for a Bill which meets his obligations to his labour supporters.

Confusion in China

From the welter of confusing reports it is difficult to assess the chances of early peace, by arrangement, in China. The acting President, General Li Tsung-jen, who remains in Nanking, is apparently anxious to come to terms; but the Communists are still insisting on the arrest of the "war-criminals" (headed by Chiang Kai-shek), and this demand is being resisted by Dr. Sun Fo and his Cabinet, who talk defiantly—from the comparative security of Canton—of a fight to the finish being preferable to "abject surrender." Communist troops are already reported to have crossed the Yangtse, though not yet in great strength; and it may be that the Communist leaders are becoming more inclined towards military conquest of Southern China, rather than waste time negotiating in Nanking with an acting President whose authority is increasingly doubtful. They clearly suspect that the intention of the Right Wing of the Kuomintang is to gain, by diplomatic haggling, a breathing space to build a new defence line, based on Canton.

Attrition in Malaya

Early official forecasts that "banditry" in Malaya could be suppressed in a few months are being belied by the course of events. "Incidents" continue to occur; estate managers are living under conditions of intense strain, and the planting of new rubber by Chinese contractors has been brought virtually to a stop by the insurgents' terrorism. The guerrillas, as the authorities claim in Singapore, may be gradually worn down by the steady monthly loss of 50 killed; but, in a jungle war of attrition, casualties on this scale give little promise of an early ending. It is admitted that the mass of the Chinese population are still unco-operative. In so far as the "banditry" is based on nationalism, Communist success in China is bound to influence Chinese opinion in Malaya; and the deplorable affair at Batang Kali, where a number of Chinese villagers suspected of harbouring "bandits" were shot while "trying to escape", has increased popular sympathy for the guerrillas. Orders were subsequently issued in Singapore that, before opening fire in such circumstances, troops must in future call "loudly" on persons in flight and give them a "reasonable chance" to stop. This suggests doubts on the authorities' part about the justification for the Batang Kali shooting; but the new order came too late to undo the embittering effects of the incident. Is the Government open to criticism for making no effort to negotiate with the insurgents? The alternative to a negotiated settlement is the deplorable prospect of protracted, inconclusive guerrilla war. But there is the fundamental difficulty that there is not, as in Indonesia or Viet-Nam, a Soekarno or Ho Chi-Minh with whom to treat.

Film Finance

The House of Lords debate on the Bill to provide State loans to stimulate independent film production left two questions unanswered. Lord Lucas, defending the Government's decision to channel financial assistance still largely through the distributors, did not reveal how far the new Corporation will go in providing "risk" capital for independent projects, nor was he able to define more closely the special cases in which direct aid will be given to a production. Each of these points is critical. At the moment, when half the British studios are idle and there is growing unemployment of technicians, more than 1,600 cinemas have been granted exemptions from the obligation to include British films to a minimum of 45 per cent. in their programmes. Yet none of the independents—whose difficulties a correspondent discusses on another page—can make a film unless they can convince their backers that they have a guarantee of distribution. The Corporation cannot solve this merely by pump-priming through the distributors, who are notorious both for caution and, often, inability to believe that any film which does not fit into safe formulas will bring a good box-office return. It must put up the money that the City will not at present find. But, if it is going to do this, it must take risks. The greatest of these risks is in deciding how to pick the "special cases," for there are no agreed standards of judgment nor guarantees of commercial success which can be applied. This is an attempt to patch up an industry which really requires a complete New Look.

East-West Trade

Mr. Wilson has drawn attention to the use made of sterling by the Russians for buying raw materials, especially wool and rubber, from sterling countries other than Great Britain, and even from countries outside the sterling area, such as Brazil. This, he pointed out, had not been envisaged at the time when the Anglo-Soviet agreement was made, and it was working out one-sidedly; while the Soviet Union were placing orders freely in the sterling area, it was refusing to accept orders for grain from this country pending a new agreement. The Russian reply to this is that they have found great difficulty in getting delivery, and even in placing orders, in Great Britain for the goods — mostly heavy equipment — they are anxious to receive, and that, if they cannot use their sterling in one way, they must be free to use it in another. The moral is clear. This country cannot afford to make sterling paid for British imports freely available for potential dollar-earning goods throughout the sterling area. It must therefore do all it possibly can, by speeding up deliveries of its own products, to avoid leaving its East European creditors with an excess of sterling on their hands.

PARLIAMENT: Rough Justice

Wednesday

A PUBLIC resignation is like a public execution. All around, the spectators watch in terror, curiosity, pleasure and pity. The victim mounts the scaffold, makes his speech and is gone. Then, the catharsis achieved, the crowd breaks up, some men holding in their hearts a secret shame, a sense of guilt. Has justice been done?

The sad dignity of Belcher's statement raised doubts which jeering publicity at the time of the Tribunal had shouted down. However foolish and weak he had been in his choice of acquaintances, his bearing did not belong to one who had acted with a wrongful intention. The faint "Ah!" and the murmurs after he had bowed and left the Chamber, came from sympathy and uncertainty.

The speeches of the Prime Minister and of the Leader of the Opposition were in tune with the mood set by Belcher. Both were more concerned with preserving the quality of Parliament and the public service than with political advantage, although Churchill couldn't resist a flick with his tail at controls. Lord Winterton, at his most effective on such occasions, said that the average Member in the present House was better informed than the Member whom he had known forty-four years ago, and as honourable. Tories, Socialists, Liberals and Independents preened themselves at this, and gave themselves a friendly cheer.

Despite the relief at the Tribunal's vindication of Ministers and Civil Servants, the fear lingered, as Blackburn put it, that "the innocent were punished and the guilty had gone free." The Attorney-General had no difficulty in showing that, within its powers, the Tribunal was as just as possible. But Hale summarised both its merits and its weakness by saying that, though adequate for a unique occasion, it was an imperfect instrument of justice.

When Raikes rose, Members thought it was to dissociate himself from the scavengers of scandal who had been pelting Dalton from ambush. Not a bit of it; he merely sneered at the "high morality" of Foot and Blackburn. The Tories were uncomfortable; and it was left for Beverley Baxter to say that however much they wanted to destroy Dalton politically, "there is not one of us who doubts his personal integrity."

Hogg, inflexible in his standards, defended the Tribunal's procedure without reservation. Away with all infamy! The ghost of Garry Allinghan (whose expulsion Hogg had urged) materialised during the debate in the form of his letter to Hogg, demanding Belcher's expulsion. But not even this inspiration would have prevented Hogg, in his Roman virtue, from seeking to expel Belcher, had he not resigned.

MAURICE EDELMAN

THE LONG VOYAGE HOME

THE full text now available of the O.E.E.C. Report on the Four-Year Plans of the West European countries confirms the impression conveyed by the previously published summaries. It shows that, even on the most optimistic assumptions, Western Europe will not be able, by 1952-3, to live on its income except at a standard very considerably lower than that of the years before 1939. In the first place, the plan-makers are found, when their separate plans are added together, to have estimated for a volume of exports which they are most unlikely to be able to sell. This is partly, but not mainly, because they have reckoned on selling one to another considerably more than they show any intention of buying one from another. It is much more because they have made highly sanguine assumptions about the probable absorptive capacity of almost every market outside Western Europe, and have put these estimated sales at levels which seem to imply the virtual disappearance of American exports, as well as a reversal of the tendency towards greater self-sufficiency in many non-European countries. Moreover, their estimates of exports depend on securing imports of materials for producing them at a level which can be reached, if at all, only by heavy spending of dollars, and in some cases imply the availability of more materials than seems likely from *any* source.

The Report recognises, and indeed stresses, the great optimism that characterises the separate national plans. It reaches the conclusion that, whatever is done to stimulate exports, the import plans of the West European countries will need to be drastically scaled down; and the best its authors can find reason to hope for is that, by 1952-3, "a level of consumption some 5-10 per cent. above that of 1948 may be consistent with independence of external aid, provided that the participating countries can make individually and by concerted action the necessary advances in technical efficiency and the structural adjustments to replace the essential imports that may prove difficult to buy from outside." The Report goes on to say that "some reconsideration of the planned patterns of food consumption may well be inescapable."

Even these conclusions rest on hypotheses which already look somewhat shaky in more than one respect. They involve assuming that the change in the terms of trade between primary products and manufactures, as against 1938, will not exceed 10 per cent.; and they depend on the restoration of a very great increase in trade between Eastern and Western Europe as a means of replacing supplies from dollar sources. This is vital; for if the (already reduced) food and fodder imports contemplated by O.E.E.C. do not include substantial supplies from Eastern Europe, whence are alternative supplies to be devised by 1952-3? The sterling area outside Europe cannot supply much more than has already been included in the plans; Asia is likelier to supply less, rather than more; and South American output has already been taken fully into account. Only dollar sources remain; but, by definition, there will be no dollars to spare.

There is yet another respect in which the plans reviewed in the Report strike a singularly optimistic note. Despite the absence (except in Italy) of any considerable reserves of manpower that can be drawn into production, the plans postulate an annual increase in output per man-hour at a rate unprecedented in time of peace and attainable, if at all, only with the aid of greatly improved technical equipment as well as of a very powerful co-operative will to work. On the other hand, the plan-makers emphasise the necessity of drastic limitation of investment in new capital goods. Accordingly, they have to endeavour to bridge the gulf by insisting on the need to divert investment most carefully into the uses in which it will yield the largest returns in higher efficiency, and will contribute most to closing the gap in the balance of payments. But how many of the countries of Western Europe are in a position to apply this tight, selective control over the processes of investment? Is even Great Britain able to do this in any full sense? In most of the countries concerned, the means of doing it do not exist. Almost the only thing they can do is to cut public expenditure on such services as housing and education, and hope that private capitalists will use the sums thus released for making the right kinds of capital investment. It is a sanguine hope.

There are many other features in the Report that could be cited to show how extremely unlikely it is that the targets set up in the various national plans will be hit by 1952-3; and it is beyond the bounds of possibility that the next stage—that of co-ordinating the separate plans into a single plan for the whole Marshall area—can do much to alter the situation, except by forcing the various countries to lower their sights. The Report speaks hopefully of the possibilities of greater mutual trade among the West European countries, to be achieved by common planning of investment programmes and mutual agreements to eschew certain types of production on condition of being allowed to expand other lines for a wider European market. These are, of course, things that Western Europe must do, in order to climb back to solvency; but we can see no hope of much positive effect from this by 1952-3, even if a good beginning could be made at once. Nor do we see hope of a good beginning being made, except on a foundation of State-controlled planning of the use of national resources for which not even the rudimentary work has yet been done in most of the participating countries. In the long run, the countries of Western Europe can achieve much by planning in common; but this will lie more in reducing costs than in increasing self-sufficiency. It should help them rather to sell more exports to the rest of the world than to dispense with imports from it.

In the light of these conclusions it becomes obvious that the European countries are asking from the United States much less aid than they really need. The difficulty is that they cannot ask for more, during the rest of the period of Marshall Aid, without making it plain that their accounts will still be a very long way from balancing by the time that aid is scheduled to come to a stop. Nor can they usefully ask for more than the United States Administration is prepared to put up as reasonable to Congress and to American public opinion. Until quite recently, it was taken for granted that nothing would be more calculated to cause Congress to cut off supplies than an open admission that the need for aid could be expected to end in 1952-3. To-day, however, there are signs of a changed temper in the United States, and Mr. Truman has been doing his best to take advantage of the change. At least there is some prospect of additional assistance in the shape of potential American investment in developing the unused resources of the dependent territories of the European countries receiving Marshall Aid.

Even so, there is the large issue of inflation. Any attempt to reach the planned outputs of the various countries means a big diversion of resources to the making of capital goods or of exports to buy them with. This means fewer goods for consumption at home, and therefore a squeeze on home-purchasing power if inflation is to be avoided. Moreover, the raising of capital is liable to produce inflationary effects, unless it is done out of taxation or offset by large budget surpluses. As the Report points out, the measures needed to prevent inflation without provoking either a consumers', or a workers', or an investors' revolt need to be very finely balanced; and it can be added that such a balance is unattainable under weak governments, or without a large and effective measure of public control over the economic system. Britain, the Report emphasises, cannot recover in isolation; for Europe as a whole, there is still a long voyage home.

ANTHRACITE AND ANGRY MEN

At Tareni, last Friday, I watched the fore-shift climb the steep path that leads from the colliery to the high-road. Across the valley, beyond the mine, the bare, savage hill was coated in filmy gold-dust by the afternoon sun. Away to the North, against a sky of duck-egg blue, stretched the great slopes of the Black Mountain, exquisite and empty save for hares puzzled by this premature March-like brilliance. At the road junction, two immense police sergeants looked on. In case of trouble? There was no need. Tareni's last coal-getting shift was going home quietly. Only from the men's lowering, resentful eyes could one guess the bitterness, the black anger within. Useless to remind them that the Coal Board's decision to close this anthracite mine had been endorsed, however reluctantly, by the N.U.M.; that the latest workings had unluckily struck "faults" whose effect was to make costs and losses astronomic; and that, even if production were concentrated—at a continuing loss and with the serious risk of meeting more "faults"—on one, least unpromising face, it would mean (on their own admission) a bare eighteen months' reprieve until ventilation difficulties became insuperable. No; "victimisation it is," because in the past they had stood up to the bosses. Had not Gaitskell "told a woman journalist" he meant to teach the Tareni colliers a lesson? Were not other mines losing more money, while at Tareni—their demands for an inquiry by independent experts refused—they were being sent, those not consigned to redundancy, into "bloody little holes in the mountain, to dig coal like foxes"? These were angry men. If I record their version of the closure, it is not because I accept it, or am competent to question the conclusions of the N.C.B.'s mining engineers, but because it illustrates sharply the absence in this area of a spirit of mutual confidence and co-operation between management and men.

If that spirit cannot be created, in ten years' time there will be precious little anthracite produced in South Wales, and most of the 17,500 miners now employed will be on the dole. Today, the economic pattern is fantastic. From the 39 collieries still operating, the current saleable output is at the annual rate of 2,900,000 tons, of which 450,000 tons are exported. Proceeds average about 56s. per ton and cannot be greatly increased: anthracite is valuable, but not irreplaceable; and present selling prices are probably, for the most part, as high as the market will stand. Yet costs per ton of saleable output range, according to colliery, from about 65s. to over 100s., and average nearly 80s. Thus, on every ton sold, even after crediting relatively high export proceeds, there is an average loss of roughly 24s., rising in some collieries to nearly 60s. a ton. Production of anthracite at half the pre-war volume is yielding for the N.C.B. not far short of £4 millions a year dead loss.

The fruits of nationalisation? By no means; since Vesting Day the downward slide of output per man-shift has been halted and, in some collieries, reversed. The colliers' fault? To some extent: ca' canny and wage-costs disproportionate to effort are items in this balance-sheet of bankruptcy. Shortcomings of management? These, too, have been a contributory factor: private ownership in the anthracite area enlisted few outstanding mining engineers. But, as nearly always in the coal industry, "the wrong is mixed"; the present crisis is attributable to a compound of circumstances inherent in the history of the anthracite mines.

Along the Northern fringe of the anthracite basin, 15 miles or so from the sea, the steeply inclined seams were first discovered as out-crops, which naturally attracted the smart capitalist. Nibbling, as it were, the edge of the basin, he had no need to sink costly shafts. Burrowing down the actual seams like a rabbit, he made quick profits and had, in the early stages of his "slant," no serious problems of haulage or ventilation. These—and, with them, a ghastly toll of pneumoconiosis—came later, and led to the progressive replacement of the "little man" by financially stronger capitalist groupings. But though, on the eve of nationalisation, most of the collieries were controlled by Amalgamated Anthracite and other combines, the traditional technique of relatively small-scale "drift" mining still prevailed. As depth, length of "roads" and haulage costs increased, the mines became steadily more uneconomic. Yet, though it must have been known in the 'thirties that most of the mines would be worked out by 1955-60, little or nothing was done to plan future long-term development. Private enterprise was content to take what it could, with no thought for the morrow.

As for labour relations, the story of the area is one of recurrent conflict and uneasy, intermittent truce. Employment from the start tended to be seasonal; and in this still semi-agricultural district the mine-worker had usually in the old days a small-holding, possession of which increased his sense of militant independence. (Even to-day many colliers' back-gardens hold a hen-run and pigsty.) Ammanford has not forgotten the wild work of the 'twenties; and though defeat in 1926 heralded for the anthracite miners long, bitter years of low wages and unemployment, the older men still boast to-day that the bosses never broke their solidarity or their courage. Punch-drunk under the bludgeoning of Fate, they were still on their feet, ready for the chance of a come-back. That arrived with the second world war, "control" and a system of secured, "cost-plus" profits which inclined the owners to buy peace at any price. Determined—and who shall blame them?—to get their own back, the men exploited their opportunity to the limit. Slackened effort was all too manifest in the declining O.M.S. curve; and the colliers' piece-work price-list had superimposed on it so many fixed "allowances" and increased payments for "deadwork" that costs, despite partial mechanisation, rose and rose as output sank.

This ill-conditioned legacy of obsolescent mines and a wage-structure which offered a meagre incentive towards productivity was inherited by the N.C.B., which has been faced with typical O.M.S. figures of 25-55 cwt. at pit-head (face-workers) and an average of 13 cwt. (over-all) in terms of saleable coal. With average earnings per shift at 41s. for face-workers and 32s. over-all, wage-costs per ton have been ranging, in different collieries, from 35s. to 68s. Ruinous figures, and I do not seek to justify the face-workers' O.M.S. But it must be borne in mind that, for all the latest methods of wet-cutting, water-infusion and hand-spraying, workers underground in the anthracite are facing risks from the dust for which no cash wage can really atone; that many anthracite seams are still hand-cut, even when there are conveyor belts; and that in these ill-planned, dying mines 63 per cent. of the labour force is on the surface or "on-cost" underground, leaving the ratio of face-workers at little over one in three. At one typical mine I visited, the "slant," descending to a maze of workings, had a length of 2,000 yards, involving three separate hauls, three winding engines and crews for hitching, shunting and unhitching the tubs—to say nothing of the pony-hauls on the "roads." Given these conditions, it is little use expecting anthracite to be raised except at a loss. But not at present losses; these do not make sense.

There is no escape from the situation except through drastic reconstruction, short-term and long-term. In the short run, something can be done by rationalising price-lists and, where the ventilation of old mines permits, increased mechanisation. Some faces now hand-cut might be under-cut by machines; and there is certainly scope for more double-ended conveyors. But these are stop-gaps; ultimately—and the ultimatum expires within ten years—all but three, at most, of the mines now working must be closed and their place taken by, say, five modern, fully mechanised pits, whose output could reach at least five million tons, and in which the ratio of surface workers could be greatly reduced. A conservative estimate of the cost of the necessary sinkings and plant would be £20 millions.

In the short-term field the N.C.B. is doing what it can: it is improvising and improving, and it has tried, in the key storm-centre—the turbulent Gwaen-cae-Gurwen (G.c.G.) collieries, where wage-costs had been 68s. and working loss 46s. a ton—to bring price-lists into line with effort. The results have been unpropitious: the miners still complain bitterly that they are denied the tools to do the job; and at G.c.G. and Gellyceidrim, where revised price-lists, determined by umpires, recently came into operation, the initial response of the colliers was to go slow and live on "Porter"—the guaranteed minimum of £5 15s., or thereabouts, a week. A fortnight ago, N.U.M. exhortations and N.C.B. hints of closure led to second thoughts; output at G.c.G. has picked up (though not enough) from a nadir of under 5 cwt. over-all O.M.S., and at Gellyceidrim is being held back mainly because the umpired award dealt unfairly (I think) with the men on contract for driving forward the "road," on whose progress the advance of the face depends. It might have been better if the N.C.B. had given the managers of these collieries full powers to vary, at their discretion, the terms of the award, and also perhaps made it known to the men that the manager of G.c.G. was authorised to close the mine *sine die* if he thought fit. For the umpired price-list was, in the main, not unreasonable: it gave the collier 42s. 6d. a shift (say, £12 10s. a week) for five tons (hand-cut, but "conveyed"); and this is not an inordinate stint. Even on a 3-ton basis he would earn 27s. 3d. a shift. To demand perpetuation of the present cock-eyed price-lists, whereby in one colliery the face-workers earn 48s. for a 37-cwt. O.M.S., and, in another, 47s. for 62 cwt., is ludicrous.

If the N.C.B. is to blame—and I think blame lies—it is in its hesitancy in taking the men fully into its confidence. Miners' lodges are frequently ignorant of the costings and losses I have given in this article. Above all, there has been no real attempt to explain to the men the long-term programme of closings and projected new sinkings. Plans for the reorganisation of one colliery, at Cefn Coed, costing £400,000, have been published; but one hears from the management side the argument that a capital investment of £20 millions would be unjustifiable unless there were an assurance that ca' canny would be discarded and costs per ton at the face brought down (as they well could be in a modern mine) to, say, 8s. Fair reasoning; but mistrust begets mistrust. The men retort that this conditional promise of a New Deal, dependent on better current behaviour, is an excuse to cover the backwardness of technical planning; that Carmarthen is the N.C.B.'s Cinderella when it comes to capital expenditure; and, anyhow, if one tub of coal earns 12s., why should five tubs earn less than 60s. when "bastards who never saw a coal-face" are drawing thousands a year in Hobart House, and the ex-owners of bankrupt mines are being given millions in compensation?

If it be "a far cry to Delhi," Ammanford, too, is remote from London. As I write, I am among men "down in the anthracite" who have the defects of their qualities. Brave, vital, generous and loyal in their comradeship, they are stubborn, vindictive and violent, and they find more satisfaction in wordily cursing Ernest Bevin than in getting coal. But it is not enough to dismiss them as a bloody-minded lot: that they may be, but they have capacities for enthusiasm and endeavour which have never yet been tapped, except in battle. If the N.C.B. were less afraid of frankness, if it combined strengthening mine managers' hands with a generous gesture—pensions, say, not six months' extra dole, for "redundants"—and if it dispelled the present cloud of rumour and suspicion by demonstrating to lodges how closings, at stated future dates, would really and truly be matched by urgency in new sinkings and developments, the response (I am convinced) would be immense. But the case for rationalisation and reconstruction—with all its disturbing impact on private lives and habits and dwelling places—must be "sold" to men who have had little cause to love or trust those set over them in the past.

When I left Tareni, the sun was sinking somewhere beyond Pontadarwe, the colliery was in shadow, only the top of the hill behind it still caught the light. As I turned from its aureate loveliness, there came into my mind remembrance of something read, and written, on a happier day: "the apple tree, the singing and the gold." These colliers, I thought, love to sing. If there is this perplexed bitterness, this dumb anger in their hearts, there is surely, on the management side, a grave lack of understanding, of imaginative leadership, a sorry failure to convince the men that there is good faith, and that the hopes of Vesting Day will not be betrayed.

AYLMER VALLANCE

Ammanford, February 6.

A LONDON DIARY

MY guesses a few weeks ago about the effects of unfreezing newspaper circulations were not far wrong, though I seem to have over-estimated the mass appeal of the *Daily Telegraph*. As I foretold, it is the *Mirror* group which has shown the sensational increases in circulation. The *Mirror* itself is now ahead of the *Express*; and I expect any day the announcement that it is the first daily newspaper in the world to achieve a certified daily net sale of over 4,000,000 copies. The *Sunday Pictorial* has also put on about 600,000 since January; but it has not, as I expected, caught up with the *People*, while the *News of the World* has actually increased its gigantic sale of over 7,000,000 copies. It looks indeed as though the absolute demand for *daily* papers is now fairly steady, so that one proprietor's gain must be another proprietor's loss. On the other hand, the demand for *Sunday* papers is still growing. Millions of households do their only real reading on Sundays and are ready to spend 6d. or 8d. on newspapers. Nevertheless, the success of the *Mirror* group is very significant, and other popular papers are beginning to draw the obvious conclusion and to imitate the formula for success. I am looking forward to the first Sunday paper which comes out with a whole supplement devoted exclusively to "funnies," like the American Sundays. The only obvious exception to this drift is the *News Chronicle*, which does try to use its extra space for more serious news. I wonder whether it should consider increasing its price to 1½d. and so, instead of trying to keep up with the *Daily Mail*, aiming rather at keeping ahead of the *Daily Telegraph*! A penny paper with a circulation of a million is a constant anxiety, but at 1½d. such a circulation becomes highly satisfactory. I believe that many of the people who read the *News Chronicle* would pay the extra halfpenny and be proud of it.

* * *

The Kravchenko trial makes the Paris fashion shows, which are running concurrently, seem staid and placid affairs, though I hear that Schiaparelli showed a hat so big that it had to have armholes cut in it. But by-and-large the Parisian dressmakers have discarded most of the grotesque eccentricities of the first uncertain post-war years, and emerged triumphantly from the British and American attempts to move the capital of fashion farther west. This is a fact of real importance for France, since fashion, though dismissed as a luxury by Sir Stafford, is a first-rate dollar earner. With Christian Dior and Jacques Fath making such a solid contribution to the revival of French democracy, Paris can no doubt afford the judicial extravaganza of Kravchenko and his wives. The trial, if you have forgotten, is supposed to be a libel action against a French periodical which described *I Chose Freedom* as a fraud. You would have thought that in these circumstances the publisher and any alleged ghost-writers would have been called as witnesses. But both sides—and the judge—seemed to have forgotten what the case is about. Anyone who has views for or against the Soviet Union can join in the free-for-all and display the latest styles of Communist and anti-Communist vilification.

* * *

No post-war action by the Soviet Government has so exasperated sensible people in the Western world as Moscow's refusal to allow Russian wives to rejoin their English husbands. I have even heard orthodox Communists admit that in this matter Moscow is behaving very badly. I have little doubt that the true explanation is that Russian girls who married Englishmen were used by Soviet Intelligence and, therefore, are the last Soviet citizens whom Moscow desires to send abroad. Attractive girls who talked good English were just those whom the N.K.V.D. would use to keep them closely in touch with the activities of the British and Americans in Russia during the war, and it is only girls who were thus qualified for work in official jobs whom Englishmen in Russia during the war would actually meet.

* * *

Many outside the ranks of the Communist Party will regret the premature death, at 45, of the editor of the *Daily Worker*. Bill Rust was a tough, uncompromising Marxist; he subordinated to "the cause" all other considerations—even his own health. But, though he had something of the rigidity of the doctrinaire and the single-mindedness of the partisan, he had a genial humour which extended even to the days which he spent with Gallacher and others in Wandsworth Prison. As a monument to his refusal ever to admit that difficulties were insuperable, he has left the paper which he and a group of devoted workers created and sustained.

* * *

It is hard to judge whether relations between North and South in Ireland are really worse than they were in the '30s or whether the present troubles are just examples of electoral ebullience. The North of Ireland Government has seized on the declaration of an Irish Republic in the South to hold a snap election on a very old register, with the assurance that Sir Basil Brooke will get a large panic majority. He has a majority in any case, because the boundaries of the Six Counties were carefully chosen and drawn to ensure that Protestants should be roughly in the relationship of 3 to 2 to Catholics. Everything is boiling up according to promise. The Northern Ireland Government boasts that it circumvented the Southern game of planting Nationalists across the frontier on the day of registration so that many people who were not entitled to vote should be able to do so on election day. (This may happen, but obviously not on a scale materially to affect results.) The Dublin Government retorts by publicly offering to help Nationalist candidates in the North. Few Southern Irishmen would feel that this constituted an interference in the affairs of another country, since to them the Six Counties are merely part of a United Ireland temporarily estranged by wicked men. The Orangemen are delighted to have an additional political weapon and they have begun a campaign of rowdyism, which gives Mr. Beattie, M.P., a fair ground for complaint in the British House of Commons. It is clear from Belfast and Dublin newspapers I've been reading that the Orangemen are deliberately breaking up Labour meetings, the voices of speakers are drowned by the beating of drums, and there are even lurid reports of anti-Orange candidates being pelted with tomatoes, reinforced with stones and even razor blades. Mr. Beattie's complaints would have been more sympathetically heard in Westminster if he were not such a rare attendant in the British Parliament.

* * *

All this might pass as mere Irish electioneering. The long-distance trouble is that just as the South regards the Six Counties as unquestionably part of a United Ireland, so in the North most Protestants regard themselves as an integral part of the United Kingdom. In time, Protestant workers will vote as Socialists, and Belfast businessmen prefer to be part of an Irish Republic. But that day is not yet. How far Northern Ireland will go in rewriting history for its purpose is fantastically illustrated by a pamphlet which I have in front of me, published by the Ulster Unionist Council, called *The Northern Iron, "Secession,' not "Partition,"* and the author writes:

> While Dublin was reaping the benefit of the Protestant Reformation (she still has two Protestant Cathedrals and none Roman Catholic), and ever planning to bite the hand that fed her, Queen Elizabeth determined to colonise the stubborn and untamed Province of Ulster. So in the reign of James I the strenuous and arduous "Plantation of Ulster" was carried out by English Protestants and Scottish Presbyterians.

* * *

In the period just after the first world war the most romantic event was Southern Ireland's successful bid for independence. The counterpart of that victory in our day is the recognition of Israel as a Nation State. When one recalls the truly appalling story of Jewish persecution through the ages, and notices its evil results on the minds both of Gentiles and of Jews, one begins to realise what it must mean to a Jew, brought up with the aggressive sense of inferiority inevitable in a Nationalist without a Nation, who learns that an Israeli coinage—the first since the Maccabean epoch—is to be minted by I.C.I. Not far from Petticoat Lane the other day I stood and gazed at a poster which read, "To Israel by Skymaster." To me such an invitation is only as exciting and romantic as the promise of a similar journey to any other part of the world I have not seen. To thousands of Jews it represents the almost incredible fact of Ezra and Nehemiah re-enacted in twentieth-century terms.

* * *

I congratulate a *Daily Herald* correspondent on having saved for posterity this passage from a speech by the Attorney-General of Guernsey:

> Gossip has been stoking the embers of suspicion and adding to the shadows that feast at the table of rumour and suspicion, where a loose tongue is the chief dish.

This holds its own, in my view, with the classical "I smell a rat. . . ."

CRITIC

ADVENTURERS UNDER CONTROL

WHEN Mr. George Gibson, travelling by the Manchester-London express on a day more than two years ago, accepted some "small change" from a stranger with which to play solo, he started a story which has not ended yet. The stranger was Mr. Sydney Stanley; whose future now seems irrelevant. We have had the Inquiry, with its immense panoramic searchlight, the Report, the catastrophe of Mr. Gibson and Mr. Belcher, the Debate, and now the Prime Minister's intimation that he is busy about a new code of conduct for Ministers and officials in their dealings with each other and with business. This is the ground on to which the Tribunal did not allow itself to trespass. Confronted with these unmapped vistas, it chose to walk within narrow legal cloisters, and perhaps could not, and should not, have chosen otherwise. But cloisters give an incomplete view; the trespass is necessary. Mr. Attlee's intimation shows his awareness of the fact that the Tribunal's report only skirts the more sensitive and novel problems which the Inquiry itself exposed.

A bare few days after all officials of the Board of Trade had been exonerated, and while salvos of pious acclaim were still echoing pleasantly in their ears, Mr. Harold Wilson, their President, was exhorting industrialists to emulate "the spirit of the merchant adventurers." We saw a number of "merchant adventurers" in the witness-box at Church House; their adventurism seemed to be at a discount there, and yet there is not much reason to suppose that it is so very different from that of their notable forerunners.

The actions and circumstances are different. But we can be fairly certain that the sixteenth-century merchant adventurer would not have hesitated to use an acquaintance at Court to cadge a priority or a monopoly; and that he would have got a knighthood rather than a legal battering.

It is a problem inherent in simultaneously restraining people and urging them to “get on with it.” And it touches everyone, not only Ministers and Civil Servants. In the public chairs in Church House one noticed a confusion of attitudes, ranging from some who had condemned every witness out of hand in advance to others who thought the entire proceeding a waste of time. Ordinary common sense was often made to feel pretty uncomfortable. Was it really such a frightful thing to have “expedited” a licence, even if this was for a friend—even, let one add, for a friend who had commended himself with a half-dozen of sherry or a gold watch? It might have seemed more frightful if all the Civil Servants had left an impression of speed, grasp and lucidity, adequate to complicated changes, as well as of irreproachable honour; the one without the other seems a negative asset. There might, one occasionally felt, be excuse for an exasperation which led business men to seek shorter cuts round the Capes of departmental delays; only one wished that they would have the courage to say that this was what they were doing, instead of babbling about welfare projects, refugee committees, and the like.

One did achieve a dignified venom. “Anyway,” said this millionaire, “it seemed a very silly thing for the worms to be eating furs in bond. They are still eating them, by the way . . . there are several million pounds’ worth being eaten.”

Immoral or otherwise, these were feelings which lodged in the minds of everyone who had felt frustration in the ordinary business of life, or who had ever tried to get something “on the side,” or with the help of a high-placed friend. They were symptoms of a moral dilemma—one perhaps out of reach even of the long arm of the law—in which the arguments appeared to be as “finely divided” as Mr. Wilson said they were in the affair of the Sherman prosecution.

Of course, this doesn’t touch the question whether Mr. Belcher and Mr. Gibson were or were not “improperly influenced.” The Tribunal has found that they were. But it does suggest that these two men have been obliged to expiate, in their own persons, tensions which have been endured by Everyman. New tensions set up by contrary pressures: the pressure of shortages, making for restraint and frustration, and the pressure towards recovery, with the urge to get on and get things done, like a merchant adventurer. In their public positions, both Mr. Belcher and Mr. Gibson had been particularly exposed to such pressures, and developed states of mind which showed the marks of the rack. The Tribunal’s findings were concerned with states of mind. “Fact-finding” was almost a misleading term. For here was no question of robbery or forgery or improper leakage or of any decision *in itself wrong*. The decision to withdraw the Sherman prosecution may well have been correct. Mr. Gibson’s letters would have raised no more than an eyebrow but for their association with the offer of a directorship and the possible inference that he wrote them hoping for further offers. You could see the machinery of inference at work in the minute, almost analytic, attention given by Mr. Russell Vick to the implications of words like “extravagant,” “ridiculous,” “encouraging.” “Encouraging to what, Mr. Haworth?” The inferences may well have been correct, but they are still guesses about states of mind, guesses supported by the majestic limitations of the law.

Mr. Belcher and Mr. Gibson were both men who interested themselves in getting things done. Mr. Belcher set out to popularise the Board of Trade and to “understand the mind of the business world.” He invited business men to apply to him personally if they found themselves in difficulties; and no doubt he had the feeling (shared by many soldiers) that losses due to irregularity of procedure were offset by gains in the snipping of red tape. Mr. Gibson was also such a man: thinking up unorthodox ways to get dollars, worrying about silk wasting in warehouses, interested in a new type of generator, passing on to Lord Beaverbrook, during the war, an impromptu offer by some rich private Americans to put up ten million dollars for a Bren gun factory—“I was over in the States, and I know how things are done over there.” A “know-how” man. Alas for themselves, both he and Mr. Belcher began to forget the “know-what,” to lose sight of the restraints imposed on go-getting by their position as Crown servants.

The business men always knew exactly what they were doing. They were anglers, casting their flies far and letting them trail across the water. Plenty of leisure and patience—“there was a long way to go before that was a deal so far as I was concerned.” The fly might strike a snag: a refused licence, a doubtful proposition, a confidence trick. They would look around for a way out and, if there wasn’t one, move somewhere else. But they wouldn’t be ruffled by a snag, or apply some more refined name to it. “You meet all sorts of people in business.” “It’s not for the ordinary layman to be surprised at any document a solicitor presents to him.” “Import pin-tables under the Marshall Plan? An idea, and we’ll just have to see what the snags are.” Simple objectives—however guarded, far, or difficult to reach—and a very simple morality. Mr. Stanley once sent private detectives to the Sherman offices in Cardiff. The Shermans found out, and they were angry. “What do you want to do that for?” they said. “We’ve got more detectives than you.”

Mr. Harry Sherman, the Cardiff pools promoter, seemed more than anyone else to exemplify the basic single-mindedness of big business. The volume and substance of his personality left a heavy deposit in the minds of all who heard him; and it was notable that all the other witnesses who had had dealings with him found themselves at some point volunteering impressions or anecdotes, with the same trend. A luminous singularity of purpose informed his bigness and big spectacles; behind them the processes of thought emerged into visibility—“I could see within three minutes that Mr. Sherman was making up his mind that he wouldn’t do it”—like fish in an aquarium, when they come to the edge of the lighted tank. Always the same thoughts. Paper allocation, more paper for coupons. “He hadn’t been there half a minute when he began talking about paper.” And always the same refusal to be drawn beyond an answer into inferences; the fish would glide out of view into the recesses of the tank.

> You thought the whole thing was extraordinary?
> Yes, I did.
> Why was it that you thought it was extraordinary?
> Well, the fact that this man knew so many people in high places.
> Well, why did that strike you as being extraordinary?
> For the reason I have said.
> What was the reason, Mr. Sherman?
> Well, it just struck me as extraordinary that he would know so many people.

One seemed, after three days of this, to have some idea what the capacities and tenacities are which make a millionaire.

By contrast, the naivetés of Mr. Belcher and Mr. Gibson seemed due to basic confusion of purpose. Given that confusion, a catalyst, such as Mr. Stanley was, could precipitate the Ministerial desire to get things done with the human desire to be convivial and welcome, and make the combination serviceable to himself. Of course, it was their own fault, in that neither Mr. Belcher nor Mr. Gibson had that valuable capacity to be startled, which almost at once put Mr. Glenvil Hall on his guard. The problem there is the problem of stamina and discrimination—what we call “character”; but not just of character in the old way, the way the public schools mean it. The need today is for men in office who can apply imagination and zestful energy to depressed areas of public life, where they are very much needed. The “background which nicely balances the existing conventions”—what his counsel said Mr. Belcher didn’t have—can’t be relied on to produce these qualities.

It will be a pity if, through fear of what’s happened, we scuttle backwards to safety and succumb to what Bertrand Russell has just nicknamed “The Administrator’s Fallacy.” There are hints of that danger in the talk of making official contacts more rigid, of swelling the powers of Permanent Secretaries. The danger is not in the imposition of restraints, but in imposing restraints for their own sake. The old question, which Escalus asked in *Measure for Measure*, “Which is the wiser here? Justice or Iniquity?” needs attention every generation or so. Just now the issues seem particularly difficult.

GILES ROMILLY

IMAGINARY INTERVIEW

Pravda puts four questions to President Truman.

Q. “Stalin asks for information
On the prospect of a Pact;
Would the States’ Administration,
By the wolves of Wall Street backed,
By the forces of reaction,
By the sabre-rattling faction,
By the clique imperialistic,
By warmongers chauvinistic,
By monopolies gigantic,
By expansionists Atlantic,
Join the Soviet Declaration?
Sign a Big Two “No War” Pact?

“Stalin asks a second question
On disarming East and West;
Would they welcome this suggestion
In the Wall Street viper’s nest?
Would the atom-bomb possessors,
Atom-worshipping aggressors,
Militarist big-drum beaters,
And the cannibal man-eaters,
Avid monsters of Manhattan
Hail the Soviet’s new peace pattern?
Would they welcome the suggestion
For disarming East and West?

“Leading all peace-loving nations,
Stalin asks, Should he postpone
Unifying operations
In his democratic Zone,
Would the Western colonisers
With their chauvinist advisers,
Britain’s Right-wing Labour traitors,
Fascist new-war instigators,
Worldwide domination plotters,
Imperialist peace-boycotters
Open up communications
With the Berlin Soviet Zone?

“Last, Should Stalin grant a meeting,
Hopeful wars henceforth may cease,
Full bilateral plans completing
For disarmament and peace,
Would you join in conferences
Held between Your Excellencies
For exchanges of opinions,
Somewhere in Stalin’s dominions
Filled with joyful working masses
Freed from your exploiting classes,
Would you journey to a meeting
For disarmament and peace?”

A. “Speaking for the U.S.A.,
For decadent democracy,
For Liberalism in decay,
For our warmongering *bourgeoisie*
For monster, sub-man, cannibal,
Reactionary plutocrat,
Monopoly and capital,
Exploited proletariat,
For Washington expansionist,
Manhattan wolf, and viper’s nest,
For sabre-rattling atomist,
And colonisers of the West,
Replying to U.S.S.R.
And to your Generalissimo,
The answer of America
Is categorically—No.”

SAGITTARIUS

A SEA OF TROUBLES

As I write, 5,000 Karen insurgents are attacking Government forces at Insein, eight miles north of Rangoon. Four days ago Bassein, one of the most important ports of Burma, fell to the Karens. Toungoo, occupied by Karens less than a week ago, has still to be retaken. So long as it is in insurgent hands, no trains can run from Rangoon to Mandalay. With the Irrawaddy impassable without naval escort, aircraft are the only sure transport between North and South.

All around the Government surge difficulties that might defeat any administration in the world, however strongly entrenched. The story begins last March. Then the Communists (White and Red Flag), who had already gone underground, began guerrilla warfare on Government treasuries, filled with pay for local officials, and on communications. There may have been 10,000 of them, easy enough to deal with in flat open country, but hard to track down through the jungles and hills that make up nearly two-thirds of Burma. It was hard, too, for the Government to be harsh on old friends who had been good comrades in the Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League. But somehow the Communists were reduced to comparative ineffectiveness. The Red Flag group, a sort of Trotskyite combination, is to-day nothing more than a pamphleteering organisation; and its leader, Thakin Soe, is in Rangoon jail. The White Flag section (Moscow line) is still a nuisance in Central Burma and parts of Upper Burma; but it is rapidly losing popular support—chiefly because of its known subservience to the Indian Communist Party and because the Government story that it is financed by the Indian Moneylenders' Association (who dislike being dispossessed of their profitable lands in Burma) is believed by the peasants.

Soon after the Communists began their fireworks, 20,000 or so of the old People's Volunteer Army also began to attack Government communications and troops, although not as a rule in unison with the Communists. This was an unexpected tragedy. It came at the time when the Government were aiming to settle many of the P.V.O.s on the land under a Redistribution of Tenancies Act. Briefly, there are two main sources of the P.V.O. trouble. First, there was the refusal of the post-war British administration to let Aung San use them as a Pioneer Corps for rehabilitation work. If that had been done, two million acres might have been reclaimed for rice, with the P.V.O.s cultivating them. As the British also forbade them to be in the regular army, except singly—and with officers who spoke English—Aung San did the only thing he could with them. That was to keep them as an army in reserve in case the independence negotiations with the British went wrong.

Secondly, as a source of trouble, there was the P.V.O.s own love of power. Accustomed to being the basis of the national hero army, they felt entitled to more seats in the Cabinet. Afraid of losing their power, they were inclined to resist disbandment and resettlement in any case. By mid-1948 they had grown to consider cultivation of land as a little beneath them. However, for some time the P.V.O.s, after their initial outbursts, have been fairly quiet. Now they are negotiating with the Government a return to the surface, but their conditions for friendly re-birth still stand too high. Again, the Government is hesitant to hit them hard for old times' sake. Ultimately the removal of arms from the White P.V.O.s (to distinguish them from the Yellows, who stayed above ground with the Government and have three seats in the Cabinet) is going to be one of the biggest headaches of all.

In August, when insurrections were beginning to be manageable, came the mutiny in the Army. Two battalions were told by Communists that Rangoon had fallen and were urged to go and take over the Government. Verification of facts is not a strong point in Burma, so the two battalions marched cheerfully down the road, only to be smashed by loyal army units mainly composed of Karens. The Government were not unduly severe and, as far as I can find out, only one mutineer has been sentenced to death.

This effort by the Army was the signal for Karens in the Moulmein area to show what they could do. They seized Moulmein and held it for ten days. Their object, it is thought—and it may be true—was to have a port in which shiploads of armaments which they were hoping for from outside could be discharged. After this a lull, save for sporadic dacoities and guerrilla attacks, settled down more or less all over the country.

When I arrived two weeks ago, the scoreboard on the law and order front read something like this. Fed up with disorder: 95 per cent. of the country. In full support of A.F.P.F.L. (of which the main party is now the Socialists): 80 per cent. of the country. Frightened of the Burmans, and consequently afraid to give up their arms: 30 per cent. of the Karens, who amount to some two million out of a total population of 17 millions. Out for power for its own sake, together with a predilection for living by looting rather than by hard work: 5 per cent. of the country. In that 5 per cent. could be lumped Communists of all colours of flag, and the White P.V.O.s.

But during the last few months, while purely Burman insurrections have been diminishing, Karen-Burman tension has been mounting. Stories of atrocities in the districts from both sides have fanned fears and hatreds. Aware that Karen troubles were to be the biggest of all immediate difficulties, Thakin Nu, the Premier, and the Socialist Party have worked hard to allay fears and meet reasonable aspirations. Normally, if a minority revolts against authority, the answer lies in an oppressive Government. But in Burma a Shan, not a Burman, is the President. A Karen is* C.-in-C. of the Army. There are still as many Karens as Burmans in the Army and Navy, and many of them have key posts. The Constitution provides for a separate Karen State, and a Regional Autonomy Commission is now sitting to decide its boundaries, and will report in February. A Karen is the Minister of Transport and another is the Minister for Karen affairs. Every reasonable demand of the Karens has been met, and some that are less than reasonable. All that has been refused is the establishment of a "Karenistan" which would stretch many miles from the Karen majority areas and takes in hundreds of miles of coastline where there are few Karens.

If, then, Karens are treated fairly in official representation and their wish for a separate State is to be granted up to the limits, and a little beyond, of democratic equity, perhaps they are victimised outside the constitutional sphere? This morning the Cabinet is meeting to decide on its action in the face of the new Karen situation. For days and nights it has been discussing the same issue: Should Government forces merely defend passively when attacked by the Karens or should they counter-attack and seek to smash the insurgent forces? It is no secret that Thakin Nu favours the former course. "What are you going to do about the Karens now?" I asked. "We must wait," he said, "until the shape of the new State is announced. Then Karens who go on fighting will be bad Karens and we can put them down. If we do it now, they will think it is Burmese spite against them. We must be patient." The Socialist Party has so far supported him, but is growing restless. To the disinterested observer the Government seem to be almost abasing themselves to placate the Karens.

But still they fight. Why? Principally it is a form of pride and, less strongly, a form of communalism. The Karens are sure of their fighting qualities. Some may even imagine they can rule all Burma, many that they can carve out by force a State far greater than the one to which they are entitled. Their pride has been fanned by one or two Englishmen who have encouraged them to take arms against the Government. Blinded by their passionate pro-Karen feeling, which makes them more Karen than the Karens, adventurers like Campbell (recently arrested and deported), and Colonel Tulloch (an old and wild member of Force 136) have aided and abetted Karen extremism. Misled by their promises of help, the Karens have undoubtedly been more violent than they would have been if left alone by foreigners. Disillusionment is setting in, at a late date, but much of the damage has been done.

The emotions of communalism, although present, are fortunately not yet considerable. Nevertheless, the main reason for the Government's hesitation in hitting back is fear that such emotions may be provoked. Broadly it seems that the majority of the Karens are prepared to wait for the announcement of the new State. Only a small proportion of the community is resorting to attacks which do not appear to be authorised by their own leaders. But even a small number of dissident Karens can cause havoc and will continue to do so until put down. And insurrections do not end the tale of troubles. Heavy military expenditure; inability to collect all the land revenue; a strike of Civil Servants against any reduction in their cost-of-living allowance; lack of money in the Exchequer to buy from the cultivators the rice which must be exported if Burma is to live—these are all problems which, coming separately, would be trials enough. But in one way or another they are all dependent on the restoration of law and order.

Rangoon, January 31. WOODROW WYATT

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* General Smith Dun resigned last week.

THIS ENGLAND

Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry and 5/- for each of the others printed.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

HOCKEY.—Shaftesbury Ladies, 4; Blandford Women, 3.—*Western Gazette.* (John Atkins.)

Letter from a furniture manufacturer to a customer:

"Further to your esteemed order for 20 medium oak chairs, the Board of Trade halved the order and only sanctioned ten. Will you, therefore, please submit a further order for 20 chairs, so that the Board of Trade can halve same and so give us the requisite number of chairs?"—*Evening News.* (D. Doubleday.)

No more dirty work this week.—*Notice in Laundry-Receiving Office,* West London. (H. W. Miller.)

But, of course, an Anglican saint can only be created by Act of Parliament.—*Observer.* (V. Biske.)

Standing, with his back to a real fireplace, the British father presents to his wife and children a picture of dignity and importance. Standing with his back to a steaming radiator, the American father looks just ordinary.—*Daily Mirror.* (V. Ezban.)

My daughter attended sex lectures last week, and on Friday the lecture took up a double period —yet she did not have one arithmetic lesson all the week. I think arithmetic should come first.—*Daily Mail.* (Reginald A. Smith.)

The boy leaning over the poop rail in Orchardson's picture of Napoleon in the Bellerophon is not an ill-mannered English midshipman, as suggested by your correspondent, Mr. W. B. Huntly, but young Las Cases, the son of Baron Las Cases. In all the circumstances, I would suggest, he is hardly likely to be using the expression "Shucks." —Letter *Daily Telegraph.* (G. F. Metson.)

New Empire Brassiere designed for bare shoulders, deep plunging decolleté, high rounded bosom, complete social security.—Advert in *Vogue.* (George Ritchie.)

Lady, 40, desires lady friend: pictures, boxing, wrestling, etc.—Advert in *Manchester Evening News.* (S. Fineberg.)

THE INDEPENDENT FILM PRODUCER

The position of the independent film producer, whose hazards were so frequently stressed in the debates on the 1948 Films Bill, has become more hazardous, if that were possible, since the Bill became law last March. The comforting words "increased production," "quota," "security," "financial aid," glorified in debate as if certain to become deeds, naturally centred on his case rather than that of the big entrepreneurs such as Mr. Rank or Sir Alexander Korda, who contrive, with or without Parliamentary assistance, to keep up a steady flow of production. The "independent," however, occupies a place in the film industry which has never been clearly defined.

Mr. Rank, it will be agreed, is not an independent producer; he is an employer of producers, some of whom, on grounds not absolutely clear, are classed as independent. Sir Alexander Korda? Demonstrably an independent producer, who can make pictures with his own hands. He creates films to please himself in the expectation that they will please others, whereas Mr. Rank makes pictures to please others in the expectation that they will please himself. But there is a third class whom the President of the Board of Trade clearly had in mind in framing the Films Bill. This is the "small man" striving for some free association with the industry which will enable him to finance and project his ideas single-handed and secure running time for his pictures on the screen. His case has always attracted attention for two reasons: first, because his contribution to films has been more significant, on the whole, than that of the combines; secondly, because the combines have always attempted to freeze him out. This was one of the conclusions of the 1944 "Monopoly" Report, in which it was pointed out that no film could succeed unless it had the backing of the big circuits.

It comes to this, then: the "independent" to-day can be one of several things. First, he can be a producer who has no independence. Independence, say the best authorities, is "the fact of not being dependent on another." But the truth is that the producer is still dependent on the distributor of his wares, without whom he cannot enter the field. The distributor, to safeguard his profits, demands one thing (box-office values, for instance) and the "independent" demands another (control of his own ideas, for example); so he forfeits his freedom before he signs the contract. From his own point of view, he is a dependent clause in a death sentence.

Secondly, he can be one who receives three ha'pence back for every shilling he spends. This at once assassinates all producers of whatever category. The shilling he spends in the making of a film, say, for £150,000, has to cover the whole cost of production, stars, story rights, script writers, studio rental, service of capital, and a multitude of other things. The distributor takes 25 per cent for his labours, the Government takes 40 per cent in tax, and the producer has three ha'pence left to die on. These facts are known in the City. Hence the reluctance of Threadneedle Street to invest in films.

If further definitions are wanted, let us say that the "independent" is one who is not allowed to make a film for £50,000. (Why not? Because if it only costs £50,000 it cannot be (a) a first feature, (b) a good film.) Or that he is one who raises private capital for films and loses it. Or, if you insist, one who raises private capital for films and gains by it. As such a one has scarcely ever been known, it is perhaps straining the definition to include him. One of the objects of the new Films Bill, given its second reading in the Lords last week, is apparently to classify and establish him.

This statement of the case is not intended to show that all distributors are villains and all independents despised men of genius, thwarted of their best ambitions. It is well known that the independent works at a loss and the distributor at a profit. Film production is a continuous process or it is nothing. The producer who raises sufficient finance for one picture must be ready to follow it up with a second and a third if he is to operate on an economic basis. He can seldom wait to recoup his production costs until the receipts come in, which may not be for a year or so. As he cannot wait, he dare not begin.

The present slashing of production costs makes it even more difficult for the independent producer, for it narrows down the range of subjects open to him to those which are fool-proof box office certainties, it compels his obedience to the star system, it extinguishes the impulse to adventure and experiment. If he is at all venturesome, he is "out."

Lowering of costs, new methods such as the Independent Frame system, plans for Television, and so on, are admirable in their way, but do not touch the root of the problem. If the independent is to survive he must be permitted to use the gifts which give him his character and safeguard the distinctive contribution he can make to the whole industry. He must be able to solve the problem of distributing his wares without cutting his throat and abandoning his purpose. He must define himself and his relation to the industry.

The slump in box office receipts has shown the poverty of ideas on the screen. Before the war it was possible to produce some 600 stories a year and give them the appearance of novelty. Then we had the Americans with us. Eighty per cent of films were American. To-day it is virtually impossible to guarantee 300 good films a year, American included, for production on both sides of the Atlantic is at too low an ebb. Many people are uneasily aware that the cinema is losing its drawing power. Television will, no doubt, produce a large-scale mechanical thrill, but it will require just as much creative material as the ordinary picture. It is men, not gadgets, that make films. At present with a few notable, and valiant exceptions—"Quartet," "The Small Back Room," "Hamlet," "Scott of the Antarctic"—the cinema is repeating itself out of its own nothingness.

What is the answer if not in new ideas, new treatments, new men and adventures in celluloid? In this field, the independent who is really independent can perform good service, for this is his object and design. That he occasionally makes a bad picture is unfortunately true, but this is a truth which applies to everybody. If he can obtain loans from the Government or elsewhere, so much the better; but he should be supported for himself, not for some inflated profit margin, he should be charged a reasonable sum for distribution, he should be given a higher responsibility, not down-graded to extinction.

Pictures are costly, and cheapness is by no means the whole answer. The need is for a new attitude of mind, a recognition that the old methods are clogging the works. An essential for the independent is a re-valuation of the pictures he makes and the audience he makes them for. The big producers turn out films for a world audience that can run into hundreds of millions. This is no good to the independent at all. It is the numbers that kill him, that drag him down to the lowest common denominator of public taste, that throttle him in the world market, when he would be quite happy with a trifling audience of ten million or so, and permission to say his piece.

A greater daring in subject and treatment, with no morbid fear of intelligence, a manageable audience, prestige for the new idea, dignity in its presentation and some guarantee of continuity of production—these are some of the aims of the frustrated independent. At present he is firmly wedged into a structure which he cannot alter or escape from. It is possible that the Government inquiry into distribution (which also means production) will help him if he has not already committed suicide. But those familiar with the industry's problems have no love of Government inquiries. They would sooner have less politics and more pictures. The independent would sooner have fewer pictures, more fun and more freedom.

Ernest Betts

DOCTOR AND PATIENT

I get impatient with critics of the National Health Service who suggest that it has destroyed the personal relation between patient and doctor, that it is "undemocratic," and that there is still a glaring disparity between what money can buy in Harley Street and what the State offers the dustman. I am neither a rich man nor a dustman, but I share with the latter the National Health Service, with the same privileges and the same defects, no less, no more. And here, from personal experience, as a parent, is what the Health Service has recently meant to me.

A week ago my baby daughter, aged seventeen months, lay down on the floor in the midst of her play. Nothing very ominous in that, but presently her mother noticed she was rigid and bubbling at the mouth. With a young family, one expects convulsions—especially as in our case there was mumps in the house. There is a simple ritual—hot baths and cold compresses—and my wife applied it. There was no reaction.

The doctor was 'phoned. She was a woman doctor whom we acquired with the National Health Service. Our family doctor, an old friend, had refused to join the national scheme; we had parted company, still remaining the best of friends and respecting each other's convictions, and we found another. She has a partner and an assistant, and this was her afternoon off. She had been to the dentist, and was resting in bed. It would have been easy for her to say: "I'll send my assistant"; she knew that mumps was in the house, and convulsions in a child are not medically abnormal; instead she dressed immediately and rushed round.

She found the baby *in extremis*; called the hospital; told the matron that it was a case for oxygen and gave general instructions. She then drove the baby and her mother to the hospital (a fever hospital because of the risk of mumps). The chief medical officer was waiting for them on the doorstep. He snatched the baby and rushed it to the ward where a squad of nurses were waiting, with oxygen, penicillin and sulpha-drugs and preparations for any eventuality. The baby was "pretty far through," and only the oxygen tent kept her breathing, with dreadful moments when her breathing stopped altogether. It looked like meningitis; it might be polio, or "infantile paralysis." A sample of her spinal fluid, with the tale it might tell of what was happening in her brain, was rushed to the pathologist. Penicillin and sulpha-drugs were injected.

For five hours that hospital doctor never left the child, and then only to snatch a hasty meal. The convulsions, which had gone on recurring, were now arrested; the baby was unconscious and still dangerously ill and receiving oxygen. When we left, after seven hours, the M.O. was still there (assured now by the pathologist's report that it was not meningitis). But what? The baby had recovered consciousness, but there was still no firm diagnosis.

Next morning we found the M.O. and our own doctor at the bedside. Against heavy odds the baby was still alive and showing signs of rallying. More anxious hours and then. . . Isla Elizabeth is sitting up and taking nourishment. Mumps are taking their normal course.

That the baby survived those desperate hours is a tribute to the doctors and the nurses of the National Health Service, to their constancy and their skill and the resources they could, without hesitation, mobilise. It would have happened that way with our private doctor—that family friend—but all I say to anyone who suggests that the N.H.S. makes doctors casual or "official" is that here was an answer. And as for "family friends," the greatest friends of my family are those who saved my baby's life. And it would have been just the same for the dustman's daughter.

Ritchie Calder

THE REIMANN TRIAL

Five days after the announcement of the Ruhr Agreement, Max Reimann, chairman of the Communist Party of Western Germany, speaking to a mass meeting of about eight thousand people, said that "German politicians who co-operate with the Allies in carrying out the provisions of the Ruhr Statute, must not be surprised if they are regarded as quislings." Reimann was charged before a Control Commission summary court with having violated an Article in Military Government Ordinance Number Eight which makes it an offence for Germans to "encourage discrimination against persons aiding and assisting the Allied forces." The British magistrate found Reimann guilty and sentenced him to three months' imprisonment.

The significance of this verdict, and the reasons given for it, go far beyond the rather humble, humorous, and not unlikeable personality of the Communist leader, who did his best in court to annoy the magistrate and irritate his counsel by starting to make an irrelevant political propaganda speech. It is possible, even probable, that he hoped for a conviction, which his party comrades will endeavour to exploit. Politicians of the other parties are less happy; and their misgivings are shared by many responsible people in the British administration. Even before the trial had started, Dr. Adenauer, chairman of the C.D.U. and president of the Parliamentary Council, urged the Regional Commissioner to drop the case since "it obstructed the constitution makers at Bonn in their work." What the constitution makers really feared was loss of authority and prestige. In this fear they seem to have been justified by the magistrate's findings. The Reimann verdict re-defines, in effect, the relationship between the Allies and German political leaders and places this relationship on a new and wholly unexpected plane. Unless the verdict is squashed on appeal, it is bound to cast a dark shadow over the political future of Western Germany.

The implications of the verdict were well set out by the defendant's counsel, Mr. Dudley Collard. Who are persons who give "aid and assistance" to the Allied authorities? Does this description cover only direct employees of Military Government, or does it include also German industrialists, civil servants and politicians who co-operate with the Allies? Mr. Collard thought it did not, but the prosecution maintained that it did, and the court accepted this interpretation. Mr. Collard argued that this would imply that "German politicians are regarded by Military Government as their agents," and that this would be "the end of democracy." And these politicians might as well pack up and go home. The accused had used words of strong criticism and warning, but they had been addressed to his German fellow politicians, and could not therefore constitute an offence under Ordinance Number Eight. What was more, in referring to the Ruhr Statute, Reimann had criticised a measure which was not yet law and might not be ratified.

The prosecution argued very differently. The Ruhr Agreement, it maintained, explicitly "called for co-operation by the Germans in carrying out its provisions." It aimed at "the peaceful reconstruction of Germany, and this could not be accomplished without the help of German politicians." It was the view of Military Government, the prosecutor said, that "those co-operating in the Ruhr Statute are doing a noble and patriotic service," and are not men who can be said to be quislings. The implications seem to be that Germans, politicians or otherwise, are not free to determine according to their own lights, however dim, what in their view is a noble and patriotic duty but that their political morals are prescribed to them by Military Government; that the future West German Government is considered by the occupying authorities to be bound beforehand to accede to the Ruhr Agreement; and that, whether they like it or not, German politicians must now regard themselves as "agents of the Allied Powers."

Now it may be said that there is nothing very new in this for the Allies, who have so regarded the position from the beginning; but it is very new for the Germans who, at Bonn and elsewhere, are still labouring under all kinds of undispelled illusions as to the degree of sovereignty their future Government will enjoy. One could not help feeling that there was force in Mr. Collard's argument that "the prosecutor looked as if he proposed to punish a German politician for disagreeing with his view," and that what goes to-day for Max Reimann may go to-morrow for the President or Chancellor of the West German Republic. The impression created in Germany by the Reimann verdict is not calculated to stimulate the co-operation to which Military Government considers itself entitled. The case and sentence will be quoted whenever the Allies call upon the future German Government to assume some unpalatable responsibility. They will find that it is impractical to work with people who never dare say "No" to them, and that people who say "Yes" all the time are usually not worth having.

Dusseldorf. PETER DE MENDELSSOHN

SO THEY SAY . . .

The national press had no doubt which was the biggest story since the General Election. The amount of space they devoted to the Lynskey Report (including pictures, reactions of *dramatis personae*, and comment) is as follows (the figures are adjusted to allow for varying column widths):—

	Column-inches	Percentage of editorial space
News Chronicle	496	63
Daily Express	485	66
Daily Herald	438	57
Manchester Guardian	429	41
Daily Telegraph	371	42
Daily Mail	369	49
The Times	332	28
Daily Mirror	198	27
Daily Graphic	193	26
Daily Worker	182	30

It may be worth noting that the *Manchester Guardian*, although carrying the fourth longest report, dropped to sixth in the percentage table by including more news of other events, while the *Daily Worker*, although it had the shortest report, slid into seventh place, in percentages, by devoting a third of its four pages to these goings-on. The *Daily Express*, with 20 per cent sport, disposed of the remaining news in approximately 10 per cent of its space.

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China Sues for Peace

On the morning of Wednesday, January 19, a Reuter message from Nanking reached Fleet Street. It announced that the Government of Chiang Kai-shek had officially called for an immediate and unconditional cease-fire, and that the capital of China was moving to Canton. After digesting this not insignificant piece of news all day, the London afternoon papers made up their minds what it was worth in their final editions.

Evening News :

The front-page lead was : ARTIST'S MURDER : MAN CHARGED. The second lead was : TUDOR IV'S GROUNDED AFTER LOSS OF ARIEL. In the bottom half of the page was a 14-line story headed : CEASE FIRE NOW, CHINESE APPEAL.

Evening Standard :

The front-page lead was : IRON BAR BANDITS BEAT UP CLERK, GRAB £500. The second lead was : BEVIN MISSING AT SHOWDOWN PARLEY. In the "late news" space there was an 8-line story headed : CHIANG CALLS FOR CEASE-FIRE.

Star :

The front-page lead was : ALL TUDOR IV'S ARE GROUNDED. The second lead was : ARTIST KILLING : MAN IN COURT. On page 2 there was an 18-line story headed : CHIANG SEEKS PEACE WITH REDS.

AUTOLYCUS

WHITE WASHINGTON

The Confederate troops which besieged Washington during the Civil War never took the city. But the South has imposed its social pattern on the capital its armies failed to capture. To-day, Washington is a Jim Crow town, far more than others which lie much farther to the South of Mason and Dixon's line. Every time that President Truman goes out, he can see fresh evidence to support his demand for a Civil Rights Bill: the ceremonial centre of the city is hemmed against the Potomac by a Negro ghetto. One American citizen in ten is denied equal status in his nation's capital because his skin is coloured. He may pay homage at the Lincoln Memorial, hear the Supreme Court outlaw covenants which deny Negroes the right to buy homes in "restricted" districts, or watch Congress debate a proposal to abolish the poll-tax. But he can find only grim humour when he reads these words:

> In Washington the Negro . . . has greater advantages than elsewhere in the Union . . . the law requires that he shall be permitted if he can afford to do so, to eat in the best restaurants, sleep in the best hotels, and be admitted to the best theatres patronised by Whites.

For the *New York Times* wrote that in 1904. The South has taken over since then and both the law and the equality it guaranteed have disappeared. The Negro has been put in his place.

Just how unpleasant that place has become—and how much decent Americans are concerned about it—is shown by the report of a very representative committee which has been investigating segregation in Washington.[*] There are some 250,000 Negroes in the city—about a quarter of its population. They are not merely pushed into inferior jobs and a slum belt that is an eyesore in an otherwise lovely capital. They also lead a life that is full of strange and penalising anomalies. Negroes, for instance, may ride on the trams and buses, but no coloured man may be employed as driver or conductor. Their dogs may scavenge with the pets of Whites, but they must be buried in a segregated cemetery. The Daughters of the American Revolution would not permit Marion Anderson to sing in Constitution Hall, yet another auditorium allowed Negroes on the stage but would not have coloured people in the audience. Last year, the National Theatre—the only legitimate playhouse left in the city—was converted to a cinema because its management refused to yield to American Equity's demand that it should make no discrimination against coloured patrons or actors. At some cafés a Negro may eat if he stands at the counter but will not be served sitting at a table. There is even one instance where a waitress refused service to four students from the West Indies and then relented when they told her they were British. "Oh," she said in a revealing phrase, "I didn't realise you weren't niggers."

Naturally, similar embarrassment is caused to foreign visitors and diplomats—a strange state of affairs which makes Washington the only capital where a Government must chaperone some guests for reasons of colour. Last autumn, a minor incident was caused when the Ethiopian Minister was asked to move his seat at a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Sometimes a coloured foreigner can protect himself by conspicuous dress or by speaking another language loudly enough to attract attention. But a Catholic from Panama, praying in a church, was given a slip of paper by the priest, asking him to leave and go to a Negro church.

These, however, are really minor affronts. The real discrimination is found in education, health services, housing and employment. The Negroes have a fine university of their own in Howard. But only one of the other four colleges in the city will admit them. The children must go to segregated schools, most of them overcrowded and obsolete, which receive $126 a year for each child against the $160 per pupil that is given to

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[*] *Segregation in Washington:* National Committee on Segregation in the Nation's Capital, Chicago.

White schools. Negro children are excluded from contact with Whites in public playgrounds. They even have a separate marbles championship. It is significant that department stores and cinemas will cite educational segregation as a precedent for their refusal to admit Negro patrons.

A coloured resident of Washington has a life expectancy twelve years less than the average for White citizens. The death-rate from tuberculosis, for instance, is nearly five times as high among Negroes than in the District of Columbia as a whole; infant mortality is twice as high; maternal mortality is six times as great. Some of the hospitals totally exclude coloured people, and all the rest admit only a quota to segregated wards—apart from two public hospitals which must accept all-comers by law. One of these, Gallinger Municipal,

> . . . puts the legs of its beds in pans of water to keep the cockroaches from snuggling up to the patients.

Most of its patients are coloured, yet until last year the medical students of Howard University were not admitted for clinical training.

Housing is a crucial issue. The Negroes have been driven steadily into the slummy "Black Belt" in the heart of the city, where a quarter of the houses lack a bath or private toilet, and there is general overcrowding. This, too, is a comparatively recent development. Negroes once lived all over the city, even in Georgetown—the charming Colonial district "rescued" by White invasion. There has been a steady campaign by the Citizens' Associations to consolidate White territory, by restrictive covenants and other means. Many people who would happily support the general abolition of segregation are forced to join this campaign by social pressure and the fear that the value of their property may deteriorate if Negroes move into the area. (This fear, in fact, has been capitalised by unscrupulous speculators.) But behind these Citizens' Associations stands the Washington Real Estate Board—the real government of the city—which is dominated by banks, insurance companies and building societies, all of which have a vested interest in maintaining the greater part of Washington as an exclusive preserve for its White majority.

It is a strange anomaly that the citizens of the capital are disfranchised, not merely in national elections—for which a case can be made, though it is pretty weak—but also in civic affairs. The city has been ruled by a commission responsible to Congress since the local franchise was voluntarily surrendered to ensure that the Negroes should not elect troublesome representatives. For a time, the chairman of the Senate Committee responsible—the virtual mayor of Washington—was the late Senator Bilbo, who told his Mississippi constituents that:

> I wanted this position so that I could keep Washington a segregated city.

Though there is a strong movement for the restoration of the vote in at least local elections, and for the abolition of the segregation which has been foisted on the capital—a sentiment of which this moving report is a fine reflection—it is still unable to remove the people of Washington from their voteless fellowship with felons, lunatics and aliens.

Bernard Shaw's aphorism—that America makes the Negro clean its boots and then proves his inferiority by the fact that he is a bootblack—is as true of Washington as any city in the South. The Negro must accept the most unpleasant jobs, the lowest pay, must be the last hired and the first fired, must not receive the promotion that is his due, must squander his talents and his education in menial tasks. All this is familiar. But it should not be so in Washington where the Federal Government employs scores of thousands. Some departments, notably the wartime Office of Price Administration, have given their Negro employees equal status and found the policy worked. Others stick to the pattern of segregation introduced by Woodrow Wilson's Administration. Perhaps the new enthusiasm for civil rights will not merely open the cafeterias in Federal offices to Negroes and Whites on equal terms but may also give Negroes a real opportunity to reach responsible posts and enjoy the same privileges and conditions of employment as their White colleagues. Certainly there will be all kinds of opposition—even perhaps from some trade unions with a tradition of craft exclusiveness. But it can be done, because it has been done in some cases with great success. And the beginning of reform is constructive self-criticism of the kind shown by this investigation.

Washington is the shop-window of American democracy. If the American dilemma cannot be solved there, what hope is there that all the legislation Congress can devise will help to solve the much greater problem of the South?

NORMAN MACKENZIE

THE POETS' FOUNTAIN

LAST night I held Chaucer's head between my hands. His cheeks were pocked by the weather and there was a heavy black shading where sooty rain had coursed between the strands of his beard, but the neck, along the line of decapitation, glistened with a crystalline whiteness. I rolled the heavy thing over until the occiput rested on the bottom of the marble basin among the jagged fragments of Milton's robes. An ordinary, untroubled face, eminently Victorian in spite of the fourteenth-century hood.

The buses went towering past, their lights stirring the shadows in this mess of broken poets and up-ended marble slabs. Before leaving I crouched down to read the inscription that once ran along the rim of the basin but was now almost upside down. TO THE FATHERS OF ENGLISH POETRY. . . . MARIAN MINCIN BROWN.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to feel legitimate indignation at this removal. The Poets' Fountain in Park Lane was ludicrously bad work and failed even to qualify for admiration under the current Victorian fashion. There was no reason why any member of the Fine Arts Commission however conservative or advanced, detached or prejudiced, should have fought for its reprieve. Yet it is impossible not to feel sad. Not long ago at Cambridge I walked between the dark muddy sockets that were all that remained of Trinity's avenue of lime trees. At first I thought conventionally of *In Memoriam*, but soon it was *Binsey Poplars* and Margaret grieving over Goldengrove. Now I mourn the Poets' Fountain.

The heightened emotion of wartime sometimes had almost the power of love to stimulate one's response to everyday surroundings. Each morning my bus took me down Park Lane, and for this reason or another the Poets' Fountain bit very deeply into my consciousness and affections. There it always was: the wide pinkish marble basin, with bronze figures of the Muses Thalia, Melpomene and Clio sitting above it with a kind of tense placidity. On the pedestal over their heads stood the Fathers; Chaucer looking down Hamilton Place, Shakespeare up Park Lane and Milton across the park, their three distinguished backsides united in stone. Stuck on one foot at the apex of the whole pile was Fame blowing her trumpet; I think that she was made of gilt bronze, but she had a very wooden air. Usually this Fame recalled a plump schoolgirl doing her Greek dancing, but occasionally she acquired a greater nobility and had something of the quality of an opera singer whose voice has long outlasted her grace. Anyhow, there she remained, trumpeting silently and unscathed through many air-raids. I loved to see her silly trumpet raised against the sky in opposition to the pendant delicacy of the seeds of the plane trees across the road. Just once I saw a gull trying to alight on the instrument, its webbed feet slipping ineffectually on the smooth metal surface. It was a delightful sight, the stretching grey and white bird and the golden trumpet against a pale autumn sky. Perhaps, indeed, it was Fame's finest moment. Certainly she had to endure some indignities, for her absurdity was provocative. There was a chamber pot up there for a few days, then for weeks a pair of London telephone directories dangled on a string.

The first time that a traffic block allowed me to read the inscription, I wondered who Marian Brown had been, and why she had raised this curious fountain. I imagined that she might have been the wife of a Victorian manufacturer who attended poetry readings by Tennyson and pined to serve higher ends. Or possibly, this was a memorial to some beautiful only daughter who had died young. It was not until last night that I consulted Cooper's *Outdoor Monuments of London* and read "Handsome memorial fountain by Thomas Thornycroft, erected at cost of £5,000 out of the property of a lady who died intestate and whose wealth came into the possession of the government . . . . The Monument was inaugurated July 9th, 1875." Perhaps Marian Brown hated poetry.

Searching further through Cooper, I discovered that, apart from the Leicester Square Shakespeare and a second Milton at St. Gile's Cripplegate, the only other "outdoor" statues of poets are of Burns in Embankment Gardens, Rossetti by Cheyne Walk and Byron just over the bushes from the Poets' Fountain. This is meagre, but we have been a nation of poets and not of sculptors, while our climate encourages us to keep such sculpture as we have under cover. I can form a horrid picture of what the result would have been had Thomas Thornycroft been asked to commemorate Wordsworth instead of Queen Boadicea at the end of Westminster Bridge. Equally, I should be unwilling to see Mr. Eliot, in the pressed-soap manner of modern official sculpture, looking mildly at the Thames from Chelsea Embankment. We are wise to forgo Spender gazing eastward from Primrose Hill and Day Lewis turning a troubled brow to Piccadilly. Yet, personal affection apart, I still regret this loss. It is sad that a mark of homage offered officially, if cheaply, to the greatness of English poetry should be swept away in order to allow an even heavier stream of traffic to lumber down Hamilton Place.

The notice of its condemnation appeared in the press months ago; last week a scaffolding and ladder appropriate to an execution had been raised. Last night, Fame and the Muses had been taken away, Milton was hacked down as far as his feet, Shakespeare to his knees; Chaucer had only lost the head that I left turned up to some rather misty London stars. By now the whole monument must be an unrecognisable ruin. I wonder whether the four ladies will experience a resurrection in the shape of Ministerial door handles or new pennies? I ask, but don't really want to know.

JACQUETTA HAWKES

THE WISDOM TOOTH

(Dr. John Donne goes to his Dentist).

God, what is this !—that, in so small a span,
Thy spear of Judgement on poor sinful man
Deals out its dictate of the Doom to come—
One spot of pain, of that most certain sum,
Which, when the Last Day's Trump has trolled its knell,
Shall fold my body to the flames of Hell:
Poor, poor black sheep! so shepherded by Sin,
Thence never to come forth when once let in.
Here Wisdom bites; for if, in one small bone,
So fierce a torment (in that one alone)
Can make its habitation, oh! how vast,
When the whole Body down to Hell is cast,
And every bone, that in fair flesh lay hid,
(Skeleton's cupboard) for the things it did
The price must pay! So this foretasting tooth,
The naughty instrument of misspent youth,
(That through blind years, and in the vain pursuit
Of transient pleasure, took forbidden fruit)
Decayed—as sure it has good right to be—
Heaven's punishment for Sin brings home to me . . .
Lord! What a pang was that! Surgeon, give o'er!
Scant me thy skill: it should have come before.
That tooth is done for. *Yet I still have more.*

LAURENCE HOUSMAN

The Arts and Entertainment

JOHN MINTON

At the Lefevre Gallery twenty-nine oil paintings, one measuring eleven feet by five, and thirty-nine water colours, drawings and prints show that Mr. John Minton has been very busy of late. Unfortunately, it is as evidence of sheer industriousness rather than vision that many of these crowded canvases chiefly impress me. A very evident zest for his subjects leads him in nine cases out of ten to allow the minutely accurate description of a mass of detail—the foliage of exotic shrubs and plant; or fishing gear, marine machinery and complicated patterns in masonry—to obscure the essential structure of design. Indeed, it is, I suspect, in an attempt to escape some failure of composition that Mr. Minton resorts, again and again, to a display of complex and decorative objects, bunched here or there in the canvas or strung out across a dull plane. They act as a distraction from our pursuit of the spatial theme; pleasant in themselves they may be: but they are no more than a decorative, flat patterning, and the area they occupy is therefore an isolated island of interest. Such islands have no spatial connotation: they cannot take their place in the spatial scheme which the picture as a whole always attempts to create. For instance, Mr. Minton draws a Corsican headland, the jagged rocks of which support the crumbling angles of a little town or monastery. To the right the sea washes the base of the promontory; to the left the slopes of the hillside swoop round and up to the artist's feet, bringing a profuse and exotic vegetation to within three yards of his monastery-focused eye. Having reconstructed the headland, the monastery, the sea with realistic truth of structure and an absence of expressive "distortion": feeling perhaps that, but for the post-Sutherland manner of his pen-strokes—and it is *only* a manner—what he has made is too near to photographic truth, too little expressive of the essential headland, Mr. Minton has turned with relief to the endless lobes of cactus, the figtree leaves and the rest, and has flooded his lower left-hand corner with a semi-abstract scribble based on the rhythms of the cacti. In the minute, monotonous complexity of this Sutherlandish detail of dots, blobs, circles, spikes, spider- or sickle-shaped leaves, we lose all sense of the pictorial space; the logic of the spatial theme of headland, sea and sky breaks down, dissolves into the consistent texture of a good textile design.

There are two kinds of logic in painting which must be made to co-exist: if, as with two such typically English painters as Mr. Piper and Mr. Minton, the logic of subject-matter and the logic of design are never completely fused, this only indicates what is certainly a natural failing. In his paintings of harbours Mr. Minton litters his quayside with the fascinating objects that are certainly appropriate to the scene. But the detailed shapes of these objects are not necessarily appropriate to the design of the picture. If Mr. Minton is often unaware of this, it is because he is at heart more of an illustrator than a painter. He records his subjects too literally: his desire to describe is stronger than his impulse to compose. A huge inventory of objects of every shape and texture receives his very workmanlike attention; but this conflicts with his more purely pictorial purpose of achieving a monumental formal design. I say he is primarily an illustrator still; but the battle inside Minton between illustrator and painter is by no means over; and the painter may yet triumph. The present exhibition is remarkable for the number of phases in this interior war which the various works illustrate.

At the descriptive end of the scale are the drawings and water colours, mainly of Corsican landscape. Though he has not Mr. Piper's acute eye for architectural style in buildings, he can register a town or village with neat precision: what is more, he can invest such drawings with a mild poetic feeling that is his own, despite its apparent derivation from Sutherland here and Piper there, even at times from Christopher Wood. But at this point Mr. Minton, not quite satisfied, looks round for a symbol or two; or at least an addition, on the level of the treatment, which will introduce a more conspicuously emotive note than his very decent, straightforward drawing has, up to that point, yielded. So in go the overworked cacti: the sky is obscured by macaroni-like lines of a tight, Beardsley-Ayrton nature, very unsuccessful: or, in 65, some fashionably triangular shadows are laid down across an uneventful street.

Many of the large oils merely transfer the kind of vision found in the literal reporting of the drawings into the necessarily more plastic terms of the heavier medium. Of such is number 1 in the catalogue: the huge fifteen-foot *Harbour.* But number 2, entitled *Bather and Fish,* takes us at once to the other end of Mr. Minton's range, where he is indeed at grips with all the problems of pictorial design, in its purest, least literary aspect. The monumental nature of this composition, in which dull lime-greens and pale blues look through between the very dark niggers and browns that predominate, owes much to the very noticeable simplification of subject matter. The bather sits facing us at left-centre, a massive burnt-sienna dummy, his anatomy a little too symmetrically mapped out with thick black lines on the brown: balancing him at right-centre is a bare table, the top of which is far too evenly studded with too-decorative and jewel-bright fish—the only case in the picture of the tendency I have described. Behind bather and table a window-frame, parallel to the picture surface, gives on to sea, sky and a low wall. Much play is made with a simple dark chairback which recurs three times in the picture. In short, there were Braque-like possibilities in this arrangement: why do they evaporate before our gaze? I think it is Mr. Minton's literalness again: the individual objects, units in the design, are not sufficiently re-created: they are just tables, chairs and a figure that have been given a slight twist out of the perspectives of reality. Only when an object has lived for a few years embedded in the depths of the imaginative mind is it ready to emerge again, transformed, into the world of objects. A Braque table or chair has an electrifying potency about it, in spite of its own declaration, "I am only a chair!" Minton's chair is an ordinary chair maltreated, twisted for pictorial reasons: Braque's chair is an essence precipitated in paint, a whole and perfect *concept* which henceforth interferes in all our intercourse with chairs everywhere.

Patrick Heron

A GREAT VIOLINIST

I cannot recall a more beautiful performance of Beethoven's Violin Concerto than that given last week by Madame Gioconda de Vito with the London Philharmonic Orchestra under their new semi-permanent conductor, Eduard van Beinum. To begin with, she produced a golden flood of tone which filled the Albert Hall with sensuous beauty, such a quality of tone as reminds the listener that the violin has many claims to be regarded as the king of all instruments. This Southern warmth of sound was not confined to the stretches of serene or impassioned cantilena; it overflowed also into the scales, the arpeggios, and the other transitional passages of figuration, so that they too sang, and each semi-quaver, no mere rung on the ladder, possessed its own proper weight and brilliance. Not less remarkable than Mme De Vito's right hand is her left, which maintains an extremely high standard of intonation, so that the triple stopping in the cadenza became a musical, not merely a sensational, pleasure; and the same was true even of the octave passages, which almost always (though composers insist on writing them) sound like a crime against the nature of the violin.

To such tone and such technique Mme De Vito adds a rare degree to musical sensibility. She played the Beethoven as though she had just fallen under the spell of this marvellous music for the first time, with the whole warmth of her heart, and with a stylistic refinement which forbade, even to so generous a temperament, any hint of excess. Some months ago, in Mozart's G major Concerto, she had seemed every now and then, especially in the slow movement, to be stepping outside the formal pattern, to be endowing the music, not with more emotion, but with a more lusciously expressed kind of emotion, than it can bear. No such flaw marked her approach to Beethoven; it was Italian indeed, but only in the sense in which the violin itself (as Beethoven seems here to have felt) is an Italian instrument, a singing visitor from the land of song. This concerto is a broad classical landscape—a Poussin—and it demands just the Italian warmth, the love of great line and grand manner, which Mme De Vito brought to it.

From the careful wind phrasing and chording of the very first theme, the orchestral accompaniment was beautifully adjusted; and the rest of the concert (*Leonora No.* 2 and the Second Symphony) showed how well the L.P.O. are already responding to this first-class orchestral trainer. There was a time when I thought some of Mr. Van Beinum's performances on the stolid side; but that was before I had heard his superb handling, at Edinburgh with the Concertgebouw, of Bruckner, Haydn and Bartók. His Beethoven Second Symphony hadn't, last week, quite the gaiety and vivacity, the sheer delicious bounce, which we remember so well from Beecham's L.P.O. performances before the war; but it was very good none the less. Mr. Van Beinum has the great virtue of equanimity and control—control of himself as well as his players; he shows excellent judgment in matters of tempo; without sluggishness, he allows time for everything to happen. The L.P.O. could hardly have made a wiser choice, and their development will be uncommonly interesting to watch.

Desmond Shawe-Taylor

THE THEATRE

"The Heiress" at the Haymarket.

This latest of the American imports is "suggested by" an early story of Henry James, *Washington Square*; and if you go to it lured by reports of a remarkable performance by Miss Peggy Ashcroft you will certainly not fail to find that. If, on the other hand, it is the words "Henry James" that tempt you, you are more than likely to be disappointed. *Washington Square* is an early, simple James story, as entrancing as it is simple. Written when he was greatly admiring Turgenev it has something of the simplicity of *A Nest of Gentle Folk;* an artlessness in its narrative of dramatised scenes (on the face of it good stage material) but suffused with irony, compassion and wit (which are less easily transferred). A plain heiress, a handsome fortune-hunter and a stubborn father, these are the terms of the story; and, as in nearly all James's novels, even the latest and most complicated, they are the terms of pure melodrama. One of the great points about James is the rich cunning with which, having given himself the most obvious of themes, he then proceeds to rescue them from the melodramatic. What the authors of this play have done, so it seems to me, is to turn the elements back into melodrama—not, of course, the Victorian variety behind James's story, but a modern melodrama in mid-Victorian dress. We don't nowadays speak of our melodrama by that name: we use the euphemism "good theatre." Melodrama (or "good theatre") is certainly, an essential ingredient of most plays but in the best they are only a subsidiary ingredient. For melodrama or "good theatre" is interested primarily in events and effects and situations, in getting its impact above everything, without respect to motivation: the people are types or at best "characterisations." But in psychological drama a play is only dramatically effective when its situations develop out of the relationships and conflicts of fully rounded characters. So if the authors of *The Heiress*, had been aiming at psychological drama, Henry James's story would surely have "suggested" to them a play as delicate and fine as, say *A Month in the Country*: aiming at good theatre instead they have produced something, at best, of the order of *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*. Perhaps it was because I expected the first that I felt let down in being given only the second. And, after all, it is the authors not I who introduce the comparison with Henry James.

However, if we take it on its own level we have, especially in the second half of *The Heiress*, an evening of "good theatre," with even some patches of silky Jamesian dialogue sewn into the canvas. In the four scenes of the first half, the fortune-hunter is introduced into the house of the dandified doctor and his painfully plain, painfully shy daughter: he woos and wins her, fails to deceive the father and finds his prospective bride threatened with disinheritance. Too many events here, too close together: we haven't enough sense of time passing and have only space enough for the crudest glimpses of each character. In the second half where the authors really leave James well behind and set events moving, the play catches alight. By the defection of the young man and the sudden realisation that her father despises her, the heiress (whom Miss Ashcroft has made so convincingly touching), suffers the two cruel blows which change her character, bringing out in her a stubbornness that can outmatch both father and lover. The first of these situations, being pure event, is legitimately melodramatised in an excellent scene, a midnight elopement at which the young man fails to turn up. The second is less successfully handled because the relationship between father and daughter has been lost sight of at the beginning. If only in the first half she had been shown (as she is in the story) to have been immensely devoted to her father, to admire as well as to fear him, then it might really have told. As it is, the filial relationship is shirked (although to have caught this would have been really to catch the period in a way that dresses and sets can never in themselves; and their relationship has been built up on more acceptable "modern" psychological clichés. But this produces at the least a good strong fat part for the heiress and Miss Ashcroft makes the best of it. The father comes less successfully out of it; partly, I think, because he has lost the wit that in the original redeems his stubbornness and cruelty. Sir Ralph Richardson brings all the tricks at his command to the part and, the doctor falling mortally sick in the last scene, he has a chance ("good theatre,") of impersonating a dying man. James Donald, excellently cast as the too pushing young man gives a splendid two-dimensional performance.

T. C. WORSLEY

RADIO NOTES

It used to be the signal beauty of the Third Programme that in it Variety did not show its grimacing face. It used to be; but now the Third has its own variety show, *Third Division: Some Vulgar Fractions*. So far it has seemed to me a highly self-conscious little programme; as though script-writers and actors alike were portentously aware that, since it was the Third they were appearing in, their material must be somehow specialised, above all that it must have something to do with culture. It has, indeed, exploited the surely repellent notion that Third Programme listeners are superior people devoted to culture in the sense of minority interests alien to listeners as a whole. I have not, I must admit, found *Third Division* particularly funny; as crazy comedy, the programme has lacked not only the pace and slickness but also the occasional effective satirical bite of, for instance, the Light Programme's *Take It From Here*. But what mainly concerns me is the implication that the Third must have its own special line in variety shows. It is true that we can never have too much wit and that, in fact, we never get enough; but it seemed to me that the Third is much more likely to provide us with wit incidentally, in the kind of programme it does so well, such as the Grenfell-Potter *How* series, the recent Johnston-Cleverdon *Amanda Ros*, Mr. Stonier's recent *Imaginary Conversation* on Strindberg, and plays like Mr. Reed's *Pythias*, rather than to do so in terms of its own variety shows. For really good variety cuts right across differences in levels of education or cultural taste, as the success of *Itma* showed; and I imagine that once he finds himself listening to it, the most incorruptible Third Programme listener must find it difficult to withstand the horrid fascination of *Twenty Questions*. The great comics, whether they come from the music-hall, like the ever-to-be-mourned Billy Bennett, or from revue, like John Tilley and Miss Lillie, or from foreign parts like Danny Kaye and Maurice Chevalier, need no specialised audience before they can be appreciated. There aren't enough great comics; but then there never are; and when new ones arise it is unlikely it will be from the Third Programme. *Third Division* implies the existence of such a thing as Third Programme humour. This seems to me dubious in the extreme. Would Mr. Wilfred Pickles conducting *Have a Go!* at the Reform Club be considered Third Programme humour? Funny men, of various degrees of funniness, occupy at least sixteen hours a week of the B.B.C.'s time. Need this be added to out of the meagre six hours' broadcasting time per day of the Third?

Recently I commented on the tyranny of the fifteen- and twenty-minute talk in the Third Programme, and through one of those aberrations which must surely occur when one tries to keep in touch with the contents of two-hundred-and-fifty broadcasting hours each week, I find I did justice neither to the Third Programme nor to my own case. For there, at the time of writing, was Mr. J. Isaacs in the midst of his series of half-hour talks on modern poetry which came to an end last week. This has been a most stimulating course, the best thing of its kind I have heard in the Third Programme. Mr. Isaacs has eloquence, enthusiasm and great learning. He lifted, it seemed to me, the whole discussion of present-day poetry out of the confines of the merely contemporary and set it firmly in relation to the history of poetry. His talks were full of fascinating speculations, often thrown off in a sentence, which one could have wished him to develop at length; for example, his remark in his last talk that probably the real subject of poetry is always poetry itself. He was particularly exciting and enlightening on the relationship between science and contemporary poetry; in this talk several generally and uncritically accepted notions were most effectively examined and found untenable. But what, apart from Mr. Isaacs' great gifts, gave the series its value was the fact that he was allowed to develop his argument over a stretch of weeks and for a reasonable stretch of time in each. The result was neither an introduction to the subject nor what is called an "appreciation," but a detailed, balanced survey.

WILLIAM SALTER

THE MOVIES

"The Street With No Name," at the Ionic, Golders Green

"Sorry, Wrong Number," at the Carlton

"The History of Mr. Polly," at the Leicester Square

"Intolerance," at the Everyman

In that growing order of crime films which seek to galvanise us with the facts, and which balance pretty evenly the stresses between cop and crook before allowing a hard-won supremacy to the former, *The Street With No Name* comes up as a shining example. In fact, it could not be made better: material and photography, acting and action, direction and the joy of muck-raking combine with the precision of a new lethal weapon. A dozen years or so in the history of crime and of crime-reporting have gone to that perfection of parts. Do you remember, from before the war, the twenty-minute thrills of the *Crime Does Not Pay* series with which Mr. J. Edgar Hoover countered the reigning gangster legend? They are still to be met with at news-reel theatres, threatening the audience, instructing and shocking, and enlisting them on the right side, in the crude emphatic terms of the "quickie." They were special journalism; and they couldn't, of course, destroy in a day the allure that Mr. Bogart and others had built up over years. But gradually the sap went out of the old gangster pictures and into the new, until to-day we can enjoy all our earlier thrills with a moral advantage. What draws us is still the work of art and documentary shaped by violence. The same was true of war films, and these new exposés of crimes share their virtues, while showing a better understanding of the enemy.

How widespread and threatening is this second post-war resurgence of gangsterism? Straight from the horse's mouth—that is to say from Mr. Hoover himself on the ticker-tape—comes the assurance that, if left unchecked, it would claim as its victims three out of every four citizens. The "street with no name" extends, the film-maker says, across America; it is the jungle on the doorstep, and only a sort of jungle warfare, highly organised on both sides, keeps it down. So into the back-streets, the night-ferries, the cheapest hotels, the amusement arcades, the pool rooms and the boxing halls we explore, jaunting on a switchback of nerves; the F.B.I. man (Mark Stevens) who goes gangster-busting has survived a Commando training, and when he is accepted by the sought-after gang we soon know why. They are young, slick, ruthless, quite without the old self-pity, and they have things—including the F.B.I.—taped. As the boss with the horrible, slow, childishly toothy smile, Mr. Richard Widmark, who has fascinated us before, makes a formidable impression. His is a perfect screen performance, and in these smaller roles his henchmen convince hardly less. The F.B.I. spy has an organised army at his back, but is almost cut off from it: the gangsters, half a dozen in number, have made of themselves an almost unbreakable striking force. *The Street Without a Name* makes the struggle between the two almost unbearably actual and thrilling; and the self-effacing direction of William Keighley puts even *Call Northside 777* and *Naked City* into the shade. For reasons best known to film financiers this brilliant little thriller has been delegated first to the suburbs.

Sorry, Wrong Number is made to seem by comparison over-long and over-stagey, and it is, in fact, both more muddled and in its convention more artificial than need be. Miss Barbara Stanwyck, as a rich neurotic at the end of her tether, is confined alone for the evening in her flat the size of Kensington Palace with only the telephone to connect her with the outside world. An overheard conversation tells her she will be murdered and the minutes tick on. Luckily Miss Stanwyck with the telephone can give a performance of shattering charm.

I enjoyed *The History of Mr. Polly*, with Mr. John Mills as the little Wellsian man, only mildly. It took a long time to wind up (half an hour or more before Polly sits on that gate with his indigestion to fan him to rebellion), and the period comedy and the carefully built-up larks didn't help matters. However, the fire went rather better, and the fat woman and the ferrying and the battle with cousin Jim went at times very well indeed. Mr. Mills can hardly be blamed if he was little more than thinly Dickensian, because that was the impression and apparently the aim of the whole film.

At the Everyman, which boasts the only silent-film projector operating in London, D. W. Griffith's *Intolerance* will be running for a season. A rest for talkie-tired ears! Four films packed into one! All rushing together towards a climax! Express train races! Fall of Babylon! Sensation! Don't miss it! In fact, this thirty-two-year-old stunner keeps a kick of grandeur, especially in the Babylonian scenes, where the advantages of being seen but not heard are strenuously brought home. The cinema has no classics, only receding landmarks, but this one still towers enough to catch the eye and thrill the fancy.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

"The Way Back," at the Westminster

The Way Back, of the title, of this American play is the way back to normality from the trauma of a jungle battle-experience. The method is the psychiatrist's couch and a shot of amatyl, which involves the author in a rather crude flash-back device. In the first scene the G.I. is paralysed and on the couch; in the middle three scenes he re-lives his war. A crude but highly effective episode this, in which his buddy is shot and tortured by the Japanese and dies in his arms. It sounds more corny than it plays, and it gives Richard Attenborough as the G.I. the opportunity for a really remarkable exhibition of emotional acting. Then flashback to the couch again where the trauma is unravelled, and that provides a most effective and moving curtain with the psychiatrist at last persuading his patient to get up and walk. But, alas for the play, this is only the end of the second act, and the last two scenes are devoted to the psychiatrist's digging deeper. For the G.I. is a Jew and so predisposed to persecution. This is too big a problem for even a stage psychiatrist to tackle in a fortnight, and a highly sentimental ending has to be fudged up. The characters are all types familiar to even the most casual cinema-goer (Arizona Hayseed, lanky and loyal, Cynical Sergeant with the right stuff at the centre and so on), but the author is certainly skilful at working up his tensions and the play is smoothly directed.

"Breach of Marriage," at the Duke of Yorks'

Breach of Marriage is a mild piece in which the author has introduced artificial insemination as his main device. This gives it a wholly spurious air of being a "problem" play. It is true that artificial insemination is incidentally but superficially discussed; yet it is not the problem of artificial insemination that works the drama, it is the wholly incredible idiocies which the specialist (Edward Chapman) falls into in his use of it. If we could swallow them, there is a quite well-managed play and a good strong scene to end on. Once again the people are all conventional types, taken whole from that large theatrical repository of ready-mades that we may imagine to be located somewhere behind Shaftesbury Avenue, and which hands out, to producers and authors, characters and situations all guaranteed sound and right off the peg.

"Widowers' Houses," at the Arts

A tepid audience hardly seemed worthy of Mr. Esmé Percy's lively and excellent production of *Widowers' Houses,* with good settings by Mr. Tony Purvis and some beautiful dresses. Is it the audience's fault or Mr. Shaw's? The play is an early one, and no doubt there are things about it which are dated. But the dialogue, in the mouths of good actors (Mr. John Ruddock as Cokane and Mr. Harold Scott as Lickcheese are here particularly good) crackles pleasingly, and the sense of situation never evaporates. The young Bullingdonian (Mr. David Markham) is horrified to learn that his future father-in-law's fortune has been made out of slum rents; and the revelation that he himself is in the same racket, on account of a mortgage, still has force. It is here only the terms and details which seem old-fashioned. The pricing of aristocratic honour, ladylike refinement, and Mayfairish Woosterism (in the character of Cokane) is itchy enough; and we ought to wriggle, even if we only titter. But it is a weakness of Mr. Shaw that one brand of irritant is never enough for him. He must prick us in a hundred places, and every prick different; the victim is not to know where his discomfort comes from, and what he can do to allay it. Only Mr. Shaw knows, and he won't ever tell.

But the effect is the opposite of what is intended; who will consult an oracle, once he has suspected it of cheating? And here the cheating is too blatant; just when we seem to have grasped the nettle of the play—the unhappy dilemma of the young man, incapable of parting with his £750 a year, for all his honour—Mr. Shaw whisks it away, and sprinkles us with some passages of tempestuous melodrama; contrived, quite irrelevantly, by the martinet temper of Blanche (Miss Stella Richman). Confounding us with this, Mr. Shaw confounds only his own play, which never recovers. It is this incapacity to stick to one thing, to sustain and develop the inner promise of a particular theme, to be other than an inconsequent and inconsistent mass of jabs, which is irritating; not in the way Mr. Shaw intended, but because it becomes dull, as all games do when someone changes the rules in the middle.

ISIS WANDERER

This too is an experience of the soul,
The dismembered world that once was the whole god
Whose broken fragments now lie dead.
This passing of reality itself is real.

Gathering under my black cloak the remnants of life
That lie dishonoured among people and places
I search the twofold desert of my solitude,
The outward perished world, and the barren mind.

Once he was present, numinous, in the house of the world
Wearing the earth like a garment, his beauty manifest
In corn and man as he journeyed down the fertile river.
Majestic he entered my canopy of night.

I trace the contour of his hand fading upon a cloud
And this his blood flows from a dying soldier's wound.
In broken fields his body is scattered, and his limbs lie
Spreadeagled like wrecked fuselage in the sand.

His skull is a dead cathedral, and his crown's rays
Glitter from worthless tins and broken glass.
His blue eyes are reflected from pools in the gutter,
And his strength is the desolate stone of fallen cities.

Oh in the kitchen-midden of my dreams
Turning over the potsherds of past days
Shall I uncover his loved desecrated face?
Are the unfathomed depths of sleep his grave?

Beyond the looming dangerous end of night
Beneath the vaults of fear do his bones lie,
And does the maze of nightmare lead to the god within?
Do menacing nether waters cover the fish-king?

I gather the divine fragments into the mandala
Whose centre is the lost creative power,
The sun, the heart of god, the lotus, the electron
That pulses world upon world, ray upon ray
That he who lived on the first shall rise on the last day.

KATHLEEN RAINE

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Correspondence

MURDER AND THE DEATH PENALTY

SIR,—We learnt last week from the Home Secretary that in the seven weeks before the Commons vote in favour of suspension of the death penalty there were 19 murders, that in the next seven weeks (the first weeks of the truce to hanging) there were 25. The truce continued for seven months, and the murder rate varied from eight in July to 13 in October. On November 18th, Stanley Clark was hanged at Norwich. During the next six weeks there were executions at Liverpool, Oxford, Leeds and Cardiff. Capital punishment was well advertised and so was the new policy which admitted of few reprieves. Those planning murder should have been pulled up sharply. In fact, there were 28 fresh murders in six weeks up to December 31st.

Those of us who advocate abolition do not claim that this spate of homicide was caused by the executions. We do respectfully ask our opponents to note that it followed them.

Howard League For Penal Reform. CICELY M. CRAVEN, *Honorary Secretary.*

DIVIDED IRELAND

SIR,—I have read with much interest Critic's "Irish Diary." Having covered rather similar ground to that of Critic's travels and investigations and having covered it much more slowly, there are several points on which I should like to comment.

It seems a pity that Critic has put such stress on political issues to the exclusion of social and economic ones. During the Home Rule controversy in 1914, Sir Edward Carson uttered a challenge to Southern Ireland to win Ulster over by showing that good government could come in the South under Home Rule. The fundamental factor of the present situation is that, in social and economic matters, successive governments of the Free State or Eire have a record of over a quarter of a century of abject failure to meet that challenge.

The basis of society in Eire is a broad possessing class and its dependants. That class—owners of property, farmers, owners of industries producing for home consumption, the Church, the liquor trade, the army, police and civil service and some professions—is able to make itself fairly comfortable according to its standards, and it is bitterly opposed to any change which might require a sharing of its advantages with other classes. Instinctively that class has used nationalism to close the ranks, to break down workers' movements and to cut Eire off from dangerous movements outside.

This class instinct has had a ruinous effect upon the economy of Eire. During the first six months of 1948, Eire's visible exports were, in round figures, £20,000,000 and her imports were £75,000,000. The country's credit balance in Britain was being rapidly eaten up. In the present state of the world, Eire ought to be a prosperous producing country; but instinctive isolationism and resistance to necessary organisation and controls have rendered this impossible. The possessing class in Eire does not feel greatly perturbed by this monstrously adverse trade situation, for they can pass on the results of it to classes outside their own circle.

As Critic found for himself, the ordinary man in Eire is not much excited about "partition." But Eire's ruling and possessing class has every motive for attacking it vehemently; first because it distracts attention from real issues in Eire, and secondly because Northern Ireland is setting standards that are a menace to that ruling class in Eire.

Critic, I feel, is wrong in describing Ulster Unionists as pursuing a "narrow type of Conservatism." While their policy is perhaps not that of the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, they are on the Left wing of British Conservative movements and their quietly pursued policies on many matters would seem red revolution to some English Conservatives. Even before the war they stood Left of the Conservative norm in respect of State controls and nationalisation. For several years now the Government of Northern Ireland has not only co-operated on terms of real cordiality with a Socialist government in Britain, but has paralleled a very large part of that Government's legislation. A small reactionary tail of the Unionist party has been left gesticulating angrily in the rear. The Ulster worker votes Unionist because he has no wish to vote away his old age pension, his unemployment benefit, his State medical services, the educational opportunities that are being made available for his children, the better conditions and pay that he gets or the exporting industry in which he works. He does not want the housing programme cut down to a quarter, nor does he want to end the efficient administration which has made Northern Ireland, on the recent admission of Mr. Sean MacBride, the one solvent unit in the British Isles.

A couple of years ago Dublin elementary teachers went on strike to try to get terms of work and pay as good as those in Northern Ireland. With the help of the religious orders, the Government broke that strike; but the moral remains. It is essential for Eire's ruling class to represent the Ulster community to Eire workers and to the world as a community never to be emulated but always to be hated, and to represent its policy as emanating from a "clique." The success of this effort is shown by the extent to which Eire labour movements place nationalistic issues before social ones and are content to do the shouting, for Costello or De Valera. At the forthcoming Northern Ireland election they are putting up candidates to oppose the Northern Ireland Labour Party, in the effort to detach it from the British labour movement.

And just one final point. Critic uses an unhappy word in describing the Eire censorship as "funny." Myself a banned writer, I found nothing funny in the sinister suavity with which that censorship closed down upon my freedom of expression in Eire.

Belfast. HUGH SHEARMAN

IRISH CENSORSHIP

SIR,—Mr. Patrick Kavanagh's letter raises a number of points rather more important than his reply to Critic's impression of his personality. The use of irrelevant words such as "hysterical," "pagan," etc., to describe a sane attitude towards contraception and book censorship reveals the essential weakness of Mr. Kavanagh's case.

If the Roman Catholic population of Eire is really as devout as we are frequently assured by native apologists, is it necessary to ban the sale of contraceptives? What about the non-Roman Catholic minority whose rights are supposed to be protected under the Constitution? And if the teaching of that Church is sound, is it so necessary to protect the indoctrinated not only from "foreign" (i.e. English mainly) writers, but from a number of books written by Messrs. Frank O'Connor and Sean O'Faolain, and Miss Kate O'Brien? I wonder whether the *Standard,* for which Mr. Kavanagh is film critic, *always* "postulates true values—even if they know them"?

As an Ulsterman who has hitherto lived solely in Belfast and Dublin, I consider the present social structure in England—with its emphatic freedom of expression and pushing towards the abolition of poverty—comes much nearer to the heart of Christianity than either Roman Catholic Eire or aggressively Protestant Ulster. Faction-ridden Ireland is a poor advertisement for the Sermon on the Mount.

I may say that, like Critic, I consider Mr. Kavanagh a "natural poet" and cannot understand his resentment of a phrase surely intended as a tribute to his genuine, if wilful, talent.

ROBERT GREACEN

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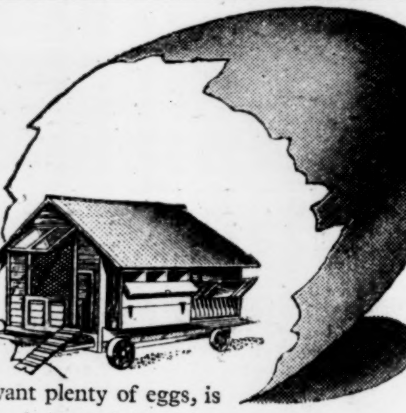

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BEA

Swissair

SIR,—Mr. Patrick Kavanagh begs the question when he says that no thinking person would pretend that contraception is an ideal. The point is that while Mr. Kavanagh can receive the courtesy of the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION'S columns to speak against contraception, I, although a citizen of Eire, would not be permitted to speak on behalf of any form of birth control other than coitus interruptus in the columns of any Irish paper or periodical; nor, which is more urgent, to advocate sexual education in Irish schools, without regard to denomination.

As to the censorship, any three old ladies of Limerick or anywhere else in the Twenty-Six Counties can do no more than take advantage of the already existing regulation, which places on the banned list any book held to be in general tendency indecent, and which may be considered injurious to faith and morals. The backstairs campaigns of old ladies of both sexes can thus wax mightily, for indeed the sun is shining on their efforts.

EWART MILNE

Burnham-on-Crouch.

GOVERNMENT BEER

SIR,—I work as a brewery chemist at one of the largest London breweries; part of my duties consist of analysing beers and, in particular, determining the strength. This is calculated in terms of the original gravity of the beer, which is the gravity of the wort before the beer is fermented, and this value remains constant and calculable no matter how far the fermentation has proceeded.

In the course of my work I was called upon to determine the original gravity of various beers which had been sent down from Carlisle—from the State-owned public houses. The values so obtained were remarkable and I quote them below:—

Mild ale	1.030
Bitter ale	1.038

Compare these with prevailing London values of 1.029 and 1.036. From the figures you will see that the Carlisle beers are the stronger. The price of these beers was 1/1 per pint for the mild ale and 1/4 per pint for the bitter—compared with London prices of 1/2 and 1/5.

For opinion's worth, the Carlisle beers were preferable in taste to the general run of London brews.

BREWERY CHEMIST

MINDSZENTY

SIR,—As Critic has commented on "the lurid account of the drug torture" given by *The Tablet*, will you let me amplify.

The account which we printed had reached us direct from the Cardinal's entourage in Budapest. It was not printed as evidence that the Cardinal had, in fact, been drugged, for he had then only just been arrested, but as evidence of what was anticipated. That it struck the doctor to whom we submitted it as "melodramatic and highly coloured" shows the difference between London and Budapest; and when Critic goes on to say "since the trial itself is to be made public, we should be able to judge for ourselves if there is any truth in these familiar allegations," I am afraid he is underrating the now very highly developed techniques of those who stage and conduct these Communist trials.

It is, of course, not an argument against the effects of drugs in larger quantities to say that in smaller quantities they can be beneficial or harmless. What types and forms of pressure, physical and moral, were, in fact, used in the interval between arrest and trial, we do not know. But the Cardinal emerged a very different man, very unlike himself before he was arrested; and the alteration was in a sense that best suited his enemies.

DOUGLAS WOODRUFF

The Tablet.

[The editor of *The Tablet* clearly believes in black magic. As we point out on our front page, the Vatican takes a more sensible view.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

MEN OVER THE WATER

SIR,—Mr. Aylmer Vallance tells us that, having visited Poland and formed the opinion that it was a happy country, he deduces that Polish E.V.W.s who do not wish to return there are work-shy, and laughs at their fears of "instant execution or Siberia."

It may be that some of them would be in no great personal danger if they went back, but if Mr. Vallance has read Mr. Mikolajczyk's recent book, he must be aware of the appalling tyranny prevailing there from 1945 onwards—of the murders and even torture of leading members of his party, of the arrest of thousands as the General Election of January, 1947, approached, and of the final suppression of a Peasant Party representing three-quarters of the nation. Mr. Mikolajczyk gives full details of names, places and dates of the horrors he describes. How can Mr. Vallance challenge these? The visit to Poland which he describes was in the summer of 1948, when all open political opposition had been crushed. Political trials which were the aftermath were usually held *in camera*. Only those, therefore, who had access to crowded prisons could have an idea of the suffering which still continued, more especially among Socialists who had refused to merge with Communists.

As to Mr. Vallance's ridicule of Siberia—does he not know that Mr. Bliss Lane, the American Ambassador, speaks in his *I Saw Poland Betrayed* of seeing on "many" occasions groups of men, women and children being marched eastward under armed guards, "evidently . . . being deported to the Soviet Union"?

Finally, does Mr. Vallance really think that liquidation of the various associations formed by E.V.W.s would be the best way of introducing them to the principles of democracy? The same comment may be made on Mr. L. J. Maynard's suggestion (in your issue of January 29th) that E.V.W.s "should be compelled to learn our ideas of tolerance." Surely tolerance can only be taught by example?

KATHARINE ATHOLL,
Chairman

British League for European Freedom.

[Mr. Vallance writes: "Relying on evidence from Mr. Mikolajczyk and Mr. Bliss Lane (neither of whom can be regarded as exactly impartial witnesses), the Duchess of Atholl complains that, in 1945-46, order was restored in Poland by methods of "appalling tyranny." It might be retorted that the methods employed by the counter-revolutionary Underground were frequently those of "appalling terrorism." Such interchange of accusations seems to me as unprofitable as it is irrelevant to my assertion that, generally speaking, Polish E.V.W.s now in Britain could find security and useful employment in their own country, had they a mind to do so. I based this assertion on personal observation of the experience, in Poland, of repatriates—who number, of course, many thousands. To the best of my knowledge, the Duchess has not visited Poland since the war."—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

CZECH RADIOS

SIR,—In your issue of February 5th Critic refers to a denial, issued by the Czech Legation in London, of a report published in the *Daily Herald* of January 24th.

Critic writes: "I cannot find any reference to this denial in the *Daily Herald*."

I should like your readers to know that we did, on January 25th, publish the Czech Ministry of Information's denial of this report. It appeared in all our main editions published from London and Manchester, but by an unfortunate slip was omitted from our last (and comparatively small) London edition. On the following day, however, we repaired this by reprinting the correction in the edition from which it had been accidentally omitted.

As for the original story, which reported an alleged ban on the ownership by Czech citizens of private radio receivers, we should not have printed it if we had had the slightest reason to suspect its authenticity. The *Wiener Tages Zeitung*, from which our correspondent quoted the item, presented the news not as a rumour but as a definite Govern-

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ment announcement by the Czech Minister of the Interior; and we reprinted the item fully believing that such an announcement had been made.

I do not understand Critic's suggestion that only "a very careful reader" would have noticed that Gedye was cabling from Vienna and that his source was the *Wiener Tages Zeitung*. Gedye named his source quite specifically, and his whole story was datelined "Vienna, Sunday" in prominent type.

Daily Herald. Percy Cudlipp

"FOREVER AMBER"

Sir,—In your issue of February 5th you refer to the *Sunday Dispatch* and state that *Forever Amber* . . . once pushed up a sagging circulation." The truth is that at the time *Forever Amber* started in the *Sunday Dispatch* the sale of the paper was the highest in its 145 years' history and during the previous eight years it had increased by over 700,000 copies. There was no question of the *Sunday Dispatch* having a sagging circulation.

Sunday Dispatch. Rhys Thomas,
Circulation Manager

UN-SOUTH AFRICAN

Sir,—Some months ago a crowd of hooligans tried to break up a meeting of the Garment Workers' Union, held in the City Hall of Johannesburg. The Malan Government did not punish the intruders but appointed a commission to "investigate the activities of the union." What it is all about, a verbatim report about one of the last sittings of that commission will help to show:—

> Mrs. Anna Koetze, giving evidence for the third day in succession, yesterday was cross-examined by Mr. Hart, legal adviser to the commission. With regard to the *Garment Worker*, official organ of the union, Mrs. Koetze said it was not a publication for Christians, it also dealt with Communism . . . Mrs. Koetze spent the tea adjournment paging through the magazine. When she resumed evidence, Mrs. Koetze said that she had found samples of Communist methods and handed in certain issues. In one, she said, there was a photograph of a woman who was a member of the Communist Party. Another, she said, contained a report of a Labour Party Congress. That was Communist methods in her opinion. In another issue Mrs. Koetze indicated a photograph and biographical sketch of Abraham Lincoln. "This man from abroad," she said, "is to my mind a great Communist. This is my view of him."

How proud the Committee for Un-American activities will feel if it learns of this blossoming of its ideas in South Africa! A.B.C.

JOHN LILBURNE

Sir,—Mr. Brailsford, discussing Lilburne's motives and outlook, suggests that "his reasons for detesting bishops may have been chiefly secular." But we know that he objected to the Church of England because "it doeth not consist of true Believers," and because it prevented him and his like from forming "a company of believers who are washed in the blood of Christ." (These quotations are taken from a pamphlet of his, written in 1638 but published by himself in 1645.) He always saw himself as a Protestant martyr in the famous line of succession popularised by Foxe's "Acts and Monuments." He was also unshakably convinced of his own predestination: are we not then entitled to regard him as a "Puritan," even if he did play cards and wear his hair long?

One further point: Mr. Brailsford seems to believe that Walwyn's outlook, too, was secular. In fact, Walwyn based his social criticism on what he called practical Christianity and on classical primitivism interpreted in the light of an old Christian tradition which stressed the absence of gentlemen at the time of Adam and Eve. Walwyn was a great Christian humanist, not a mere follower of the brave, but egotistical Lilburne or the well-meaning but much over-rated Overton (who, incidentally, was and remained a Baptist). W. Schenk

University College, Exeter.

MAN OF BLOOD

Sir,—Mr. A. J. P. Taylor, in his witty attempt to interpret "the most startling event in English history" in purely psychological terms, disposed of the "Charles myth" only to pronounce the revolutionary events of 1649 to be not only "unexpected," but "inexplicable." The King's behaviour is "the only part of the story that makes sense." Although Charles' execution can be simply ascribed to "the work of one man," that man was, alas, "the most elusive figure in English history." The conclusion seems similar to that suggested by the recent Third Programme broadcast on "The Character of Charles I": that there is not, after all, much to be learnt from history.

Historical events must naturally appear to be "the result seemingly of casual circumstance," if the historical process is divided into compartments and the relation between them ignored. To say that "the old order which Charles represented was legal and religious, or perhaps mystical," but "certainly not social or economic," is to conceive a society without social or economic basis; and Mr. Taylor is only able to ignore the social aspect of the Revolution by roundly asserting that there were no essential social differences or conflicts of economic policy between the two sides. Had not the revolutionaries of 1640 been campaigning for 40 years against monopolies, against feudal tenures and antiquated forms of taxation? And did not even contemporaries explain the conflict in terms of class alignment? The gentry, it is true, were divided; but that should stimulate and not preclude a careful analysis of the class relations during the Revolution.

Psychology can help to illuminate the process of historical development. It can also be used to divert attention from the fundamental class conflicts through which social changes take place. It has become popular to explain imperialist wars as the result of Freudian complexes in the German people, and to interpret industrial unrest as a symptom of "maladjustment." Such conclusions will be confirmed if it can be established that the great revolutionary events of our history were merely "traumatic experiences." The solution to the conflicts of capitalist society will then be found to be, not in a socialist revolution, but in a mass psycho-analysis of "the English political nation."

Southampton. A. L. Merson

ARAB STUDENTS

Sir,—For some months past we have been concerned about the needs of a small group of Palestinian Arab students in this country. When they originally came to study in our universities they were supported by their families, but these, as a result of the outbreak of hostilities in Palestine, are now homeless and destitute and quite unable to support their sons and daughters here. These students do not come within the scope of the International Refugee Organisation, Unesco or the British Council.

Consequently, International Student Service has undertaken to accept responsibility for these students, and we are sending out an appeal on their behalf. At present these students, of whom there are thirty, are studying the following subjects at various universities in the United Kingdom: Medicine 5, Law 13, Philosophy 2, Commerce 1, Chemistry 2, Architecture 1, History 1, Engineering 5.

We require £5,000 to assist these students during the present academic year, and we shall be grateful if you can publish this appeal in your columns.

Kathleen Harrison,
Advisory and Relief Secretary.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

About 1918 Lytton Strachey,* then 38 years old, turned from the study of literature to the study of history. He had made an important discovery. He had discovered that the Victorian Age was not dull, not conventional, not stuffy: it was baroque, bizarre, even funny. It was useless to announce such a paradox suddenly in Bloomsbury. The dullness and conventionality of the Victorian Age was an accepted orthodoxy of the time, admitted with that absolute finality with which one age customarily judges its immediate predecessor. What was the evidence, they would have asked, for so preposterous a heresy? And if he had pointed to that seemingly infinite series of ponderous, official, commendatory, many-volumed collections of lives and letters which weighed like multiple tombstones upon the grave of every politician or bishop or headmaster, they would have derided such a view; for who could persevere, in the reign of George V, through those notoriously tedious works of hagiography, as remote and unreadable as the Benedictine folios, or the Lives of the Saints?

Lytton Strachey did not waste time in giving such advice; he followed it. A fine scholar, an exquisite stylist, a disciple of the Age of Reason but a lover of the Baroque, he turned from the studies in which his mind had been trained and seasoned and diving to the bottom of that deep and apparently dull sea, the nineteenth century, he emerged with small bucketfuls of strange polyps and fantastic sponges, as samples of its astonishing submerged variety. In so doing he became, from an essayist and a student of literature, an historian; and the success of his two immediate works, *Eminent Victorians* in 1918 and *Queen Victoria* in 1921, made him, in the public mind, and in spite of his disclaimers, an historian of the Victorian Age. It is as an historian, at least in part, that he must be considered, and his reputation judged.

He would not himself refuse such a condition. He not only wrote history, he wrote on historiography; he extracted its principles, defined its methods, and awarded their place to his predecessors, Gibbon and Hume, Macaulay and Carlyle, Froude and Creighton. The rules of historiography, he declared, with the firm finality of the expert, are few and obvious: "a capacity for absorbing facts, a capacity for stating them, and a point of view." The criterion seems to me dubious: a capacity to interpret facts seems at least as important as a point of view which may precede the facts and may be desperately erroneous. Sir Charles Firth, I believe, was in all respects a greater historian than Mr. Hilaire Belloc, and Mr. W. H. Chamberlin's history of the Russian Revolution is more luminous than that of Trotzky. Still, such was Strachey's conclusion, and it was one by which he would willingly be judged: for he would certainly emerge successful.

Strachey certainly had a capacity for absorbing facts. Those great commemorative volumes, unread and unreadable by his contemporaries, he eagerly devoured, and anyone who attempts to read them after him must be astonished at the unremitting sensitivity of that vast appetite. Course after course of heavy and sometimes windy fare is swallowed, and yet nothing relevant is missed, every trace of flavour, however slight or subtle, is instantly appreciated and accurately distinguished. In all his writings, Strachey once told a friend, there was only one occasion when he had consciously yielded to the temptation of supposing a fact for which he lacked evidence or authority. That supposition was the shortness of Dr. Arnold's legs: for that detail he had no evidence, only a conviction that, on the general grounds of a rational universe, it must have been so. Apart from that one deviation Strachey felt that his reputation for scholarship and accuracy was above reproach.

He also had a capacity for stating facts. Seldom has a writer been more compelling in his presentation, and even if all his facts had been as speculative as the shortness of Dr. Arnold's legs, we should still read him, not for information but for pleasure, as we read Herodotus and parts of the Bible, and other works of mythology. Strachey was a brilliant narrator, a brilliant portrayer of character. He shows it not only in his central figures—in his wonderful portraits of Lord Melbourne or Mr. Gladstone; there is not a character in his works, however secondary or peripheral, who does not assume an individual reality and complexity. And all those characters and their interrelations are drawn together in perfect prose, a prose that is coloured and yet clear, subtle and yet firm, sparkling and only occasionally vulgar.

But what of Strachey's point of view? He had a point of view of course: it was his point of view that informed his style and made it so irresistibly readable. It is also his point of view which ultimately disqualifies him as an historian.

Lytton Strachey was a humanist: he was interested in human motives and human eccentricities, awake to every instance of human absurdity or inconsistency. Like some skilful Jesuit confessor of the Baroque Age, he could explore, with seemingly infallible technique, every quaint recess and dark corner of the labyrinthine human mind. But this interest, this technique, so useful for the exposure of human behaviour, did not extend to the analysis of impersonal or social facts, which also are the material of history. To Strachey historical problems were always, and only, problems of individual behaviour and individual eccentricity. He read big biographies and wrote little biographies: Boswell was the model for his reading, Aubrey for his writing; but historical problems, the problems of politics and society, he never sought to answer, or even to ask. He read the five volumes of Sir Theodore Martin's *Life of the Prince Consort*, and distilled from it every drop of essence that could possibly heighten the flavour of his own work, but he skated timidly past the political significance of that patient, central, administrative career—its effect on the power of the Crown. He read the six volumes of Monypenny and Buckle's *Life of Disraeli* and contented himself with an incredibly superficial verdict. Because of a few personal eccentricities, Disraeli is dismissed as a mere egoist, a vain, trivial figure of "rococo futilities," an "absurd Jew-boy" visible under all his trappings to the very end. Disraeli's political achievement—a social and political revolution silently achieved, by brilliant tactics, under the forms of immutable conservatism—is never noticed: it is on a senile passion for Lady Bradford that the statesman's whole career must finally be judged.

Further, even within his own limits Strachey shows certain fatal defects. The worldly Jesuit confessor, so confident in his skill, sometimes made shocking errors. It is the danger of any apparently infallible technique. History—even personal history—is often dull. Strachey could not bear to be dull; and therefore he strained unreasonably to be funny, to sustain a drama of conflicting personalities and grotesque incidents even beyond the capacity of his material. Having made the important discovery that the Victorians were not dull and conventional but strange and complex creatures, he could not resist the temptation to make them, by judicious interpretation of motives and skilful manipulation of doubt, just a little stranger, just a little more complex. Hence those brilliant portraits, those wicked contrasts, those touches of exquisite extravagance and occasional cheapness which seem for a moment to invalidate even the best of his works. The effect is unfortunate, for in fact Strachey is much more reliable than he seems. Mr. F. A. Simpson has shown that in one instance, in his life of Cardinal Manning, Strachey has succeeded in creating a false impression where he could not have ventured to state the equivalent fact. Many readers might deduce from this that his whole portrait of Manning is invalid. The reader of Strachey's principal source, Purcell's *Life of Cardinal Manning* knows that this is untrue. Purcell's devastating book is, in form, the antithesis of Strachey's essay. It is very long, and it never offers an opinion. And yet this apparent panegyric, this officially commissioned biography of the cardinal, is packed with secret dynamite, whose detonation, in 1896, had shattered the unnaturally smooth front of Popery in England. Against the documentary revelations of Purcell the defenders of Manning were helpless, and it is instructive to look back at their agonised and desperate writhings. Strachey, by his excessive zeal in converting unassailable facts into questionable judgments, supplied an unexpected defence. Manning's supporters could thenceforth discreetly forget the name of Purcell and complacently dismiss his revelations as being "only Lytton Strachey."

A more significant instance of Strachey's excess is provided by his treatment of General Gordon. His account of Gordon in the Sudan, retiring into his tent "for days at a time" for secret communion with the Bible and the bottle is the richest flourish in his brilliant picture of that strange, unpredictable, polychromatic character. It so pleased Strachey that he repeated it in his essay on the Memoirs of Li-Hung-Chang: Gordon there reappears as "the half-inspired, half-crazy Englishman, with his romance and his fatalism, his brandy-bottle and his Bible." In fact, as Mr. Bernard Allen has pointed out, this picture is a total fiction. Strachey had seized eagerly on a passage in Chaillé-Long's memoirs, twisted a passage from an article by Burton to match it, and the Bible and the brandy-bottle were the result. In fact the brandy-bottle, the ultimate crown of the whole literary structure, never existed. Long had invented it, in his spiteful seventies, when, filled with hatred of Gordon, he was improving his own already published and anyway unreliable memoirs. The real object had been not a brandy-bottle but a prayer-book. Unfortunately, "brandy-bottle" is funnier than "prayer-book"; Strachey could not resist that final touch of absurdity; and his brilliant portrait of a crackpot crusader is, by that one dangerous detail, overdone.

This reduction of all history to personal history, this desperate straining after effect, accounts also for Strachey's occasional vulgarity—his reduction of serious problems to merely personal terms and the bathos with which his essays almost invariably end. These qualities appear most forcibly in his third historical work, *Elizabeth and Essex.* The Victorian Age, if it was remote in one sense, was near in another. It was near in time: Strachey had grown up in it; and it was near in place: it might have evaporated in Bloomsbury but it could still be recaptured in less quickly-changing parts of the metropolis. Such nearness is a useful corrective for a historian. But the Elizabethan Age was in every sense remote, and Strachey, who was never able to breathe a foreign climate, created, in seeking to recapture it, not history but an historical novel, almost as distant from reality as *The Black Arrow* or *Ivanhoe.* The success of such a romance was instant. In America it sold by the hundred thousand. It was both the crown and humiliation of his career. It has brilliant portraits—the portrait of Bacon, like a swaying cobra, holding his breath "in the midst of some great sentence, some high intellectual confection . . . in a rich beatitude, fascinated by the deliciousness of sheer style"; the portrait of the aged Burghley seeking vainly "with trembling arguments and venerable aphorisms" to appease the outraged Queen; there are ingenious caricatures, as of Philip II and Antonio Perez, luminous phrases and dreadful vulgarities, and a total strangeness from the subject. The age of Elizabeth was an age which Strachey, isolated in his twentieth century Enlightenment, simply could not understand

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* *The Collected Works of Lytton Strachey.* 6 vols. *Chatto and Windus.* 7*s.* 6*d.* each.

To have written a best-seller (it is said) is a chastening experience, and after *Elizabeth and Essex* Strachey (I am told) suffered from humiliation and remorse. What he might afterwards have done we cannot say, for he died four years later, having written only essays in the interim. But it is probable that his best work was still to come. He had ventured into a foreign climate: the experience had been exhilarating, even intoxicating; but on retrospection his antics had seemed to him somewhat absurd and possibly indecent. After such an adventure it would have been natural to return home. Strachey's home was not the Elizabethan Age; it was not even the Victorian Age in which he had been an inquisitive and somewhat mischievous observer from across the frontier. It was the 18th Century. There he was in harmony with his contemporaries; there he had no occasion to postulate absurd motives or mock incomprehensible emotions; and across the rearward frontier of that age he could still observe, with sharp sceptical eyes, yet another more truly Baroque era to engage his wit and fascinate his mind. It is a pity Strachey did not take back his perfected style to the eighteenth century—or rather to that elongated century, the Age of Reason, which extends from the rise of Louis XIV to the fall of Metternich. There he had achieved some of his best, least popular work, in *Landmarks in French Literature* and *Books and Characters*—early works which by their sympathy seem more mature than his later, more famous studies. Unfortunately he died early, leaving imperfect work in an experimental and perhaps mistaken field. His imitators observed his apparent success but not his real failure. Not having written best-sellers they were unchastened by humility; and they sought to continue his adventures into history. Fortunately, they are now all quite dead. They lacked what will preserve even his errors: style.

H. R. TREVOR-ROPER.

L.-G.

David Lloyd George: The Official Biography. By MALCOLM THOMSON. *Hutchinson.* 21s.

The Lloyd George, whom I knew as the elder statesman of the 'Thirties, seemed to me the *cleverest* man I had ever met. There was nothing profound or great about his mind; he was not clever in the sense of being able to think clearly in realms where most of us grow fuzzy or fail to travel at all. But he was more clever than other people in the sense that he was more intuitive, more agile in seeing how to meet a situation or in devising an expedient to enable him to avoid meeting it. Above all, he was uniquely successful in persuading people to alter their minds, to accept his proposals in the belief that they were being met half-way. To this cleverness, people of an older generation would add something about L.-G.'s "fascination." I recall a story of Lord Keynes who, in the days of Lloyd George's greatest prestige during the Peace Conference in 1919, called on the Premier in company with a Cabinet colleague who had been brought to a state of fury by what he regarded as Lloyd George's trickery. On the way to L.-G.'s hotel he told Keynes that he would "stand it no longer," and that he would resign unless L.-G. pledged himself beyond possibility of retreat. The event turned out otherwise. As they entered the room, Lloyd George took a quick glance at his by no means insignificant colleague, guessed immediately the reason of his visit, and began to talk about other current topics. For an hour he was at his most droll and impressive and enchanting. The Cabinet Minister never came within sight of putting his ultimatum. Indeed, he never mentioned the subject at all and after the visit had apparently forgotten its purpose.

Lloyd George exercised something of this hypnotic quality on many public men. C. P. Scott used to speak of him in a different tone of voice from that which he used for other politicians. Lloyd George was his idol, the one statesman able to carry into effect the radical reforms preached for so many years in the *Manchester Guardian*. Scott was constrained to quarrel with Lloyd George during the Black-and-Tan period in Ireland, but he made it up afterwards and the famous letter to Asquith in which Lloyd George defended his conduct during the General Strike was submitted to Scott and in part re-written by him. He told me this incident with pride. He would have regarded it as a great condescension on his part to help any other politician, but he was himself flattered when asked by Lloyd George. The younger generation of liberals, E. T. Scott, for example, felt nothing of this magic. To them L.-G. was just a very tricky politician.

Here is a fascinating subject for a biographer. Apart from some famous passages of description by Lord Keynes, I have not read any attempt to analyse Lloyd George's secret. Mr. Malcolm Thomson has not even discussed it. He paints the picture of a great man—which L.-G. certainly was—essentially noble and high-minded even when he made his rare mistakes. He omits the qualities which present the special problem of L.-G. His fascination does not emerge, nor do his depths of deception and evasion or the moments of nasty, bad temper. I wonder if Mr. Thomson has ever read Laurence Housman's brilliant satire, *Trimblerigg*? I wish he could have told us whether Lloyd George himself read it and made any comment. But that is just what is the matter with Mr. Thomson's book. He never tells us what we want to know and can't learn elsewhere. This is an "official" biography. It is pedestrian, conventional, and on its own level informative. But Mr. Thompson has never had the industry or courage to delve deeply.

There is nothing wrong, for instance, with Mr. Thomson's account of Lloyd George's attitude to the Women's Suffragette Movement, except that it simply omits all the intriguing details of Lloyd George's behaviour. Has he ever heard the story, for instance, of how Lloyd George, who always declared himself to be on the Suffragettes' side, promised to make a statement at a public meeting, which might have settled the whole business, and excused himself afterwards for saying the precise opposite, by explaining that directly he saw the audience he knew that they would not like him to say what he had promised the night before? Again, Mr. Thomson gives a good account of Lloyd George's great fight for national insurance and land reform. How much more interesting his book would have been if he had looked up the current records, or even interviewed some survivor from, say, the battle with the doctors, to see whether the bitter charges of lying and trickery that were then made against him now seemed to have any justification.

Probably the most interesting part of Mr. Thomson's book is the account of Lloyd George as the young politician who took upon his shoulders the mantle of radical leadership which Joseph Chamberlain had voluntarily discarded. One gets here some explanation of the veneration as well as the hatred which Lloyd George inspired. He had a subtlety, a demonic drive, a wit and an adroitness which are, I think, unmatched in our political history. As a schoolboy in a cathedral town, I recall the way in which, during the period of the Budget and House of Lords controversy, people used to go about cursing Lloyd George with a bitterness which I have only since known equalled in Republican anathe-

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mas against Franklin Roosevelt. At the same time, as soon as the Conservative leaders met Lloyd George in the flesh they would promptly be won over—the ogre was found to be a most courteous, amusing and delightful companion, a wonderful raconteur, sympathetic with his opponents' point of view and, apparently, extremely accommodating in meeting every objection. That, after all, was part of the technique. So long as he got his own way, why make personal enemies? On occasion, of course, he was ready enough to make class enemies, to rally class sentiment, to overcome class opposition. The Limehouse speech was only one of many indictments of great capitalists and landlords. Perhaps the most interesting document in Mr. Malcolm Thomson's book is the text of the correspondence between Lloyd George and King Edward VII on this occasion. Edward (whom the world pretends did not interfere with domestic politics) sent for Asquith to protest against the violent tone of Mr. Lloyd George's speech. Asquith replied that he had better take the matter up with Lloyd George himself. He informed Lloyd George of the King's intervention and Lloyd George wrote a letter which the superficial reader may think to be unnecessarily subservient, but which does not in fact make any concessions of language or policy.

Mr. Thomson's book is an interim biography. It is not sufficiently documented or detailed to be historically important; it is too timid an interpretation to be philosophically interesting. It provides the outline which must be in the mind of an historian before he begins such serious tasks as deciding whether Lloyd George really intrigued to become Premier in 1916 or whether, as Mr. Thomson assumes, the discomfiture of Asquith and the final rupture of the Liberal Party were due to an intervention by Lord Northcliffe to which Lloyd George was not privy. Mr. Thomson whets our appetite for the book that will take us behind the scenes.

The authoritative biographer will also have to consider problems of interpretation which were outside Mr. Thomson's scope. Was it inevitable that Lloyd George should be so nearly a political cipher for the 20 years after his fall from power? Had the period of radical reform necessarily given way to the period of working-class Socialism? In a most useful introduction, Countess Lloyd George tells us that L.-G. used himself to recall Joseph Chamberlain's dictum: "Whatever you are tempted to do in politics, be sure you have the party machine behind you." Certainly he was helpless once the Liberal Party was broken. He could not be a Socialist or talk like one. He could only talk like a social reformer. He could not be a Conservative, for he was instinctively the champion of the little man. He only became head of a Coalition because he was the one man ruthless and able enough to carry through the war to its bitter and disastrous end. It seems to follow that even if the Liberal Party had not been shattered and if he had remained its head, the Liberal-Labour fight would have gone on, and Lloyd George would ultimately have found himself helpless for lack of a solid Party backing. In retirement he could not reconcile himself to this conclusion. He was naturally a Coalition man, as we know from his surprising efforts to form a Coalition with Balfour in 1910. It seemed to him madness during the Baldwin period that Labour and Liberal should not make common cause. But his Committee of Action never looked like succeeding. Once when he put forward proposals which seemed to me to play into his opponents' hands, I ventured to explain my doubts to Lloyd George. He stopped for a moment and then, putting his finger to his eye and pulling down the lower lid as if he was asking me to remove a fly from it, he said, "Do you see any green in my eye?" No, there was no green, nothing naive in those brilliant, twinkling, and deceptively clear organs. But long years of exile had taken from them that peculiarly penetrating quality which had enabled him to know at a glance how the public would react.

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"Don't *force* it . . . just let it come! let it come!" and the famous theatrical producer, Monsieur X, would accompany this injunction with a delicate, persuasive gesture of his distinguished fingers in the air, as if conjuring some rare, but extremely coy, spirit from another sphere to materialise in front of our eyes there in the rehearsal room. Monsieur X was referring to the birth of an artistic conception, either in the mind of an actor in regard to a new part, or a producer trying to interpret a new play. He meant, I think, that it was important to hold in abeyance the conscious workings of the mind—facile and bossy as they are so apt to be—and to allow the deeper, inarticulate levels of feeling to percolate slowly upwards into the light. "Let it come. Let it come." The phrase is often in my mind. For this canon of æsthetic diplomacy is rewarding applied to many things; certainly to both the writing and reviewing of novels.

Let us then take the first book, *A Cat and a King,* hold it up aloft, and delicately and persuasively make M. X's beckoning passes towards it, then sit back and see what sort of world materialises slowly in the air. But before you can say "Jack Spratt!" a cocktail cabinet has appeared! Without apparently any hesitation whatever. Racks of glasses. Scotch and soda. And a thermos bottle packed with ice. There is also a massage table and a medicine ball and a bed. This is the bedroom of a famous and popular actor, Luke Gregory. He is a highbrow actor—look at the Pollock prints upon the otherwise bare white walls. And there is Luke himself, tall and straight-backed, with "startling good looks" that suggest maturity and firmness of character, and with dark hair "almost sculptured in the way its curl was controlled and groomed." He is discoursing with a charming girl in a very becoming coat and skirt, bought, obviously, from one of the big Oxford Street stores. Luke has just engaged the young lady to be his costume supervisor at the theatre, although she has had no experience of the sort before. "You've decided that you must give up your fiancé." He says. "You seem to like this old man (meaning himself) quite a lot, which is strange, isn't it? You must be given time to think about what you're doing." "I don't need time," says the girl. All the while a loud sound fills the room. What is it? The beating of the girl, Jill's, heart. Luke's "lines" (his part is that of Don Juan, in the Flecker play of that name) are lying on the arm of his chair. It seems he is well cast. For the scene now fades for a moment. A blackout. And then the same bedroom materialises again not long afterwards. Now it is night (only 10.30 though) and Luke is standing by his writing-desk still in his tweeds, and there is Jill a few feet away from him, but now in a transparent nightgown. Luke goes towards her. There is the sensation of prickly tweed against bare flesh—a delightful backstage pipe-dream for young women or, at any rate, for women young in heart. It is a romance racily told in the modern girl's vernacular by a writer

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who has got what it takes as a craftsman to make this kind of thing. It is all substantial, lovers' quarrels at the pub, trouble with the personnel in the green room, and the bitter hysteria of the son who has been stifled by the father's success. There are heaps of characters, and all of them plausibly sketched in. The present reviewer most enjoyed—but this is quite personal—the week-end spent at the country cottage of Mr. Schlumberger, the costume designer (a tiny place, but oysters, chicken paprika with chestnut *purée,* accompanied by Lachrima Christi, for lunch, chocolate cake and sardine sandwiches for tea, shortly followed by Martinis; and for dinner onion soup decorated with floating crusts and grated cheese, and a roast leg of lamb, and zabaione "with accompanying Champagne"), and hopes Miss Forbes Robertson will write her next book about *him,* with his "startlingly unsuitable" appearance, his "black hair hanging glossily," and (so one imagines) the figure of a regular Humpty Dumpty in his "scarlet corduroys."

Now we will take up the copy of *Sleep of the Pidgeon,* hold it aloft and again invoke the world lying buried within to manifest itself, with the aid of Monsieur X's magic formula ". . . Let it come." A very long silence follows. Try again! "Let it come! . . ." But . . . Nothing! And yet there *is* something happening all the time; look: wreaths of smoke are uncoiling and writhing from the volume, and one can smell incense and brimstone surely. And a weird rumour thickens the dark air, which finally grows into an unexampled babel of voices. Talking. Talking. Talking. But what are they *saying?* Or, rather, what can be the meaning of that which they are saying? "The poet is the man who understands least the meaning of conclusion," says a voice. "I had the paradoxical feeling that everything had been solved with no solution," says another. Yet another asks if God is more understandable in the darkness than in the light. Another compares the reality of a dead soldier with the half-formed characters of a novel still in the process of creation. Only very slowly, and with the greatest difficulty, does one gather that the main themes under review are emotional mutilations, blockages of the sense of living, and the varying spiritual compensations thereof. On and on goes the chanting—the very rooms talk and have moods and look about them; ideas, too, talk to each other as if they were relations and cousins, and abstractions, such as the Future, take legs and walk the Paris streets in the rain. And now we begin to discern the Protagonists themselves! There is the ancient Mme d'Albert with pale moon face—flushed unhealthily—who lives in the past, like the dried grasses in the junk-filled sitting-room of her Paris flat. Thus, self-mutilated, she is dead spiritually long before she dies the bodily death. There is Mme d'Albert's daughter Irène, with her "squattishness and large bosom." She, also, is locked up in the past in her love for her dead brother. Next, a young man appears, gaunt and white, Roger Lariboule, who always wears dark glasses—again in order to be protected from the living world. It is he who, on the last page, shoots himself in the great cemetery. Like the Pidgeon of the title—the bird of Life—he has not been able to sustain a pure flight upwards, but fell asleep on the journey and dropped back to the earth again. He frankly confesses, "I have wanted to mutilate myself." Then asks, speaking of the two world wars, "Is the suicide of the world, this vastly primitive suicide, the approach of God in the darkness?" But now appear the three creative figures: Mark Warren, an American novelist; then the beautiful young Marcelline, who lives in the reality and life of God; and the Abbé Sortelle, with the forehead of "boundless limpidity," and the flat with the symbolic white carpet on the floor.

There are the germs of many interesting ideas in this work, but they appear, at least to one reviewer, to be sandwiched amongst the masses of mumbo jumbo. And that is because Mr. Fowlie, though a searcher after a new focus and new values, is, to my eye, a man of religious faith who places the things of this world in a secondary position in his landscape—in the background, in fact—and seems to be reserving the foreground all the while for some glimpse of the other world, which never, in fact, is vouchsafed. And this gives to his people, seen through his eternity-bound eyes, an anæmic ghostliness. And to the reader in general a feeling of vertigo and night-starvation. One is certainly grateful to an author who struggles to present us with ideas. Yet there is something about Mr. Fowlie that makes me think of that friend of Commander Campbell, of the Brains Trust—that man who eats a spoonful of marmalade and immediately the top of his head begins to steam.

This leaves very scant space, I'm afraid, for Alex Comfort's extremely cleverly written report (fictitious) of life in a Jewish prison camp in South Africa. He reports the material and visible world magnificently, as only a poet can. And, too, all the scorching aridity and the horror of the position is there. But we must say out roundly that the people struck us as dummies, mere receptacles for pain, and quite lacking in those variegated human qualities that would make them seem worthwhile reading about.

Very different is the short but rousing *Circus of Dr. Lao,* a book I really and truly enjoyed. After a rather sticky start, one gets into the circus itself, and there meets the exhibits. These are a number of mythological creatures, as: a Chimera, a Werewolf, a Medusa and some others. The habits, characteristics and conversation of these beings are simply horrific. This story is full of a sense of character and personality; it is filled with magnificent fancy and of appalling jokes that curdle the blood and make you laugh and scream with fright most refreshingly. Definitely recommended. But not, for Heaven's sake, for children!

Julia Strachey

OPERATION CLEANING UP

Man Against Myth. By Barrows Dunham. *Muller.* 10s. 6d.

Mr. Dunham suggests a theory of the origin of the myth. Myths, which may be defined as beliefs which there is no good reason to think true, just occur, chance products, apparently, of the fertility of the human mind. They are "notions which have lain around in various works" and the world's literature is full of them. Presently a change takes place in the context of social circumstance, as the result of which the myth, previously harmless, begins to acquire propaganda value, usually because it assists to maintain the social and political *status quo.*

For example, there is the nominalist myth, according to which though individuals are real, classes, systems and universals are not, being, in fact, abstractions to which men have given the labels of names. Nominalism had a revolutionary effect in the Middle Ages, when "it was directed against the feudal system." Having lapsed for centuries, it is rediscovered in our own time when, disguised as the new science of Semantics, it is "used to impede the anti-Fascist struggle." Or consider Herbert Spencer's myth that poverty is a sign of biological unfitness—in the struggle of the jungle the weak are eliminated; in the struggle of the social system they become "the poor." Capitalists seized on its propaganda value; the poor, they taught, we must always have with us; it is a biological law; therefore, we can depress wages and sweat workers with a good conscience. Or there is the myth that you can't

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change human nature. Human nature is belligerent, therefore you can't get rid of war; human nature is selfish, therefore you can't get rid of competitive Capitalism; human nature is fundamentally stupid, therefore it is a waste of time to try to enlighten the masses or to educate the Negroes. Or—a more subtle version—it may be held that human nature *can* be changed (and change is admittedly desirable), but, unfortunately, the desirable change cannot be effected directly; something must always happen first. When the "something" in question is examined, it is found that it, in its turn, is dependent upon the prior occurrence of the change, so that the argument becomes circular.

Thus, Negroes must not vote until they are educated; they can't be educated until they can go to school; there will be no schools for Negroes, unless money is voted to provide them; money will not be voted for this purpose until a majority of legislators is prepared to vote it; but there can't be such a majority until the disfranchised interests are in a position to elect them, that is to say, until Negroes have the vote. It is by such subterfuges that men disguise from themselves the fact that they don't in their hearts really want the change that their idealism professes to desire. These are the idealists; men "who combine the pleasures of virtue with the comforts of inaction." The idealist "does not entertain principles; they entertain him."

As the reader will by this time have divined, Mr. Dunham's thought has a strong Marxist bias. In a series of lively chapters he examines and explodes the myth that there are superior and inferior races; the myth that there are two sides to every question; the myth that "beauty is in the eye of the beholder"; or that "there is nothing good or bad, but thinking makes it so," and so on—that art is, or at any rate should be, non-political, that all problems are merely verbal, that words will never hurt anybody, and that it is impossible to be both free and secure. And in every case it turns out that the myth is the product or, more precisely, that its prevalence is a function of a passively reactionary (Capitalist), or openly oppressive (Fascist) society, and that it is either deliberately or unconsciously used to impede the development of the forces which are urging mankind in the direction of an egalitarian form of society.

To me, the most interesting myth-dispeller is the chapter on Logical Positivism and Semantics, and this, because Logical Positivism itself poses as the great myth-dispeller. It presents us with a picture of the philosopher's world as a bric-à-brac shop cluttered up with a number of lay figures and worthless antiques, God, the Absolute, Justice, the Good, Truth, Universals, and so on. Their only title to reality is their capital letters and these they owe to nothing but man's tendency to mythologise. The logical positivist appears, passes the rapier of his logic through the ribs of the lay figures, lets out some sawdust and a little bran, and lo and behold, they are there no longer. The metaphysics they supported are myths, the problems they posed are "pseudo," and they themselves are only words, words without meaning:—"Philosophy," as Mr. Dunham brilliantly sums up, is "but the breath of speech about speech."

Mr. Dunham's criticism centres upon two points. First, instead of solving problems logical positivists merely dismiss them by calling them verbal: "The whole enterprise is a little like increasing your circle of friends by counting the names in the telephone directory." Secondly, nobody really believes the problems *are* merely verbal, not even logical positivists who constantly insinuate through the back doors of their arguments, the concepts which they have ostentatiously kicked down the front doorsteps, as, for example, Messrs. Chase and Korzybski, leading Semanticists, who, while attacking the law of contradiction, constantly have recourse to arguments which make nonsense, unless the validity of the law is assumed.

Mr. Dunham deals in the second place with the effects of logical positivism. It is customary to maintain that these are nil. Mr. Dunham, however, makes a number of telling points. If there is no objective right and wrong, if moral judgments are, as logical positivists hold, merely ejaculations of our emotions of approval and disapproval, then "one cannot demonstrate that Fascist practices are evil; one can only express dislike of them. No philosophy would better please the Fascists themselves, since moral questions could then be safely left in the hands of the police." If "God exists" is a meaningless statement, it is difficult to see how anybody could be induced to believe in Him. Mr. Dunham comments, "theologians who were long hardened to objections that their statements were false, were left breathless before this new charge that they had, for the most part, been saying nothing at all." If Logical Positivism is correct, you can say, "one atom bomb can destroy 50,000 people" (statement of fact), but not, "it is a bad thing to destroy 50,000 people" (statement of evaluation)—or, rather, you can say it, but "the word 'bad' adds nothing to the factual content of the statement." Now, can anybody seriously maintain that the spread of such doctrines will have no effect upon ethics, politics and theology? In fact, arguing within the context of his near-Marxist background, Mr. Dunham has little difficulty in showing that they will tend to sap effort, discourage initiative, destroy the hope of change and so assist reaction and sanction inertia. And if, he says in effect to the logical positivists, nothing is in itself morally disapprobatory, why should you object so strongly to being told that these *are* the effects of your doctrine?

This is a good book. It blows like a cleansing wind through the slums of modern thought. It is a first-rate piece of surgical work and we should be grateful to Mr. Dunham for having written it.

C. E. M. JOAD

VOX ET . . . ?

Mirabeau. Voice of the Revolution. By ANTONIA VALLENTIN. *Hamish Hamilton.* 21s.

Mirabeau was once explaining to Talleyrand the qualities needed for a saviour of France. Talleyrand said: "You have forgotten one thing." "What?" "He must be pockmarked." This qualification would do as well as any other. Popular taste is always strange and, as a recent case has shown, splendidly unpredictable; it is strangest of all at a time of revolution. Who could have guessed that Robespierre would personify the great French Revolution or Lamartine preside over the second? Who, in 1917, could have foreseen that Stalin would one day rank with Marx and Lenin? Or, for that matter, who could have foretold that Mirabeau would be the first man to be buried in the Pantheon? That his body would be thrown out of the Pantheon again within a few years was certainly more predictable; to this day it remains bewildering that it ever got there. The career of Mirabeau affords the most striking proof that the France of 1789 was in a true revolutionary spirit. Every value had lost its force; and France turned to the man who had repudiated every domestic, every political and—especially—every financial virtue. Mirabeau represented the France that had repudiated its past. He was on terms of open war with his parents and with his wife; he had deserted one mistress after another and, enslaved to sensuality, the more he loved them the more disgracefully he treated them; he sold his pen to the highest

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bidder; irresponsible, violent, bankrupt, almost insane, he represented the France that was waiting to be born. What distinguished him from other men of his time was his sense of power. He knew that a new power must take the place of the old that had perished; and he supposed that he could supply this power from his own personal resources. The effort killed him; but then, his way of life would have killed him in any case.

How can this strange fantastical career be fitted into a book? Miss Vallentin is of the school of Stefan Zweig, a writer who had a certain vogue in the inter-war years. Essence of this school was that the life-story will carry itself. Get out of the way; let your hero run the book; disentangle every detail of his career; and the biography will be made. Certainly Miss Vallentin has applied the master's doctrine. The reader learns that when a new mistress appears every piece of her background, from her family history to her sexual tastes, will be carefully worked out; and in time the conscientious reader wearies as Mirabeau tumbles from one bed into another. It was inevitable, within the conventions of this school, that Mirabeau's life before the revolution should be explored in detail. All the same, what did it add up to? That a man of his character must have some woman to bewitch him and that he would lavish on the woman of the moment all the money that he had not got. It is true, no doubt, that there is no way to a woman's heart like a bottle of champagne; this, however, can be learnt by experience without studying Mirabeau's life. The thing that can perhaps be learnt by studying Mirabeau's life is how a leader is brought to the front at the beginning of a revolution; and this problem is not really illuminated by the present biography, since bedding a woman and dominating the National Assembly are both presented with the same detail and in the same tone of voice. But maybe that is the answer and a proof of Miss Vallentin's skill. Maybe Mirabeau was merely a gigantic physical force pouring itself out and overwhelming the resistance of the moment. His political writings are profoundly uninteresting, the worst sort of rhetoric of the eighteenth century. So, one may answer, are his love-letters. They would never do the trick nowadays. In both cases, the miracle of personality intervened; and that is now lost. What an idiotic idea to suppose that France could be saved through the exertions of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette—but no more idiotic than the rest of Mirabeau's career. Only now he was performing on the national stage and, for a year or so, caught the eye of every spectator. In short, Miss Vallentin's book is profoundly irritating and unsatisfactory; and yet leaves behind exactly the right impression of an incomprehensible figure who achieved the highest pinnacle of greatness.

A. J. P. TAYLOR

BOLD, CAUTIOUS AND TRUE

The Jungle is Neutral. By SPENCER CHAPMAN. *Chatto & Windus.* 18*s*.

This story of how its author spent almost the entire period of the Japanese occupation of Malaya on the run in the jungle is absorbing as a narrative of adventure. What happens next is always unexpected, always exciting, and always contributes to the tension of the adventure and the reader's appetite for more. But the author is much more than a man of action who has lived in an exciting sector of the world and can now give a breath-taking account of events. He brought great gifts to his adventures; he has an imaginative sympathy for other states of mind than his own, and he has an acute awareness of those states of vision and feeling which give action its significance. His actions are placed, if one may so put it, for the reader in a thoroughly convincing setting of personal relations, textures, smells, sights and sounds. In one typical passage Mr. Spencer Chapman is cycling by night with a small party of Chinese guerrillas. He has been ill, and he has become used to furtive and limited movement in the jungle; he finds the openness of the road disquieting and the effort of keeping up with the party of fit Chinese on his heavily-laden machine almost unendurable. At last, as the road, which has been winding apparently interminably up hill, flattens and dips downhill, he suddenly realises that the road is familiar, that he knows where he is, that twenty miles of freewheeling down a comparatively good road lit by brilliant moonlight are in front of him. The exhilaration of that realisation, and of the wild gliding rush that follows, reaches the reader so vividly that the pleasure, the sheer delight of it, becomes his own. The rush is into trouble, as it happens. Chapman rolls on ahead of his companions, and stops in a shadow to let them catch up. A figure glides alongside after a few moments, but it is a Malay policeman with a shot gun—one is suddenly wounded, hiding, creeping from shadow to shadow in the roadside undergrowth, thinking no longer of the next mile and of to-morrow, but of the next yard and of the next second or minute. The change of pace, feeling and texture is handled brilliantly. One recognises the best kind of writing, too, in the fact that the Malay policeman emerges from the incident as a person, not merely as an active figure ticketed "enemy," and that one can understand how it was that Spencer Chapman regretted having to wound him, and was later glad to hear that he had recovered from his wounds.

Over and above its excitements the book has very great psychological interest, since it is that very uncommon thing, an account of mental health and successful adjustment. The Hero has gone out, and now seems an almost incredible figure, only to be tolerated if his heroism is redeemed by a thoroughly convincing failure as in the case of Scott—perhaps the archetype of the twentieth-century British hero. Scott took part in a race to the Pole, lost it, and, by failing to take the best available advice, choosing the wrong equipment, and making hurried and inadequately worked out victualling arrangements, hazarded and lost his entire party. One is schooled to admire him immensely, and to look on Amundsen (who took advice, chose the right equipment, made plans that worked like clockwork, and brought his party home) as hardly a sportsman, and certainly no hero. It is part of the same ailment that leads the Americans to admire Lee, who shirked the responsibilities of his command, and to despise Grant; the Anglo-Saxon fascination with the breaking point, the hidden weakness, the empty or discreditably furnished rooms behind the noble facade. Spencer Chapman belongs to an older and sunnier conception of heroism; he is the born fighter who will win because he has studied his weapons, the thinking man who will not be broken by natural obstacles because nature is unthinking, the activist whose muscles will not be cut by doubts or questionings because he has a robust Victorian rational apparatus for reducing the most bewildering complexities to simple practical propositions. There is an appalling moment in the book when the author recognises that a party of British stragglers he has encountered at a Chinese guerrilla camp are all dying—not of any complaint or wounds, but simply because they believe their situation is hopeless. They have recognised a breaking point and are dying of the recognition—they have been taught to believe that the sort of heroism that enables Spencer Chapman to survive far more desperate situations is phoney, either a mask for self-interest or something clergymen and schoolmasters smarm about to make you feel

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ashamed of yourself. They have been reared as group men and indoctrinated with the idea of the good citizen, the man whose individuality is modified and smoothed down so that he comes to think of himself as a unit in a class, union or other group, and who relies always on a kindly exterior world. When out of work turn to the dole, when out of health turn to the public health machinery, when foxed go to the Citizens Advice Bureau, whenever anything puzzling or threatening appears turn outside for help—and when the social group disintegrates in time of trouble die like an orchid in an unheated greenhouse. The Chinese wanted Spencer Chapman to shoot one of the stragglers because they thought he was insane and a danger to their party, which was one day's jump ahead of the Japanese patrols and fed and supplied precariously by smuggling from enemy controlled territory; his form of insanity was a delusion that he wasn't getting his rights, he wasn't getting proper food, or enough tobacco, the Chinese were doing him out of his share of what he had a right to. . . . The group might do well to recognise that although the group man seems to be the good citizen he is hand-picked quisling material who will certainly turn on it with a head full of delusions of this kind immediately a crisis develops. The individual who has been brought up to respect the heroic virtues, to rely on himself, and to earn rights by the honourable discharge of responsibilities, is almost certainly more reliable social material, and quite certainly a spiritually richer and happier being.

ANTHONY WEST

THE UNSEEN WORLD

The Heathens. By WILLIAM HOWELLS. *Gollancz.* 18*s*.

Western civilisation is like a lame man whose two crutches have let him down at the same moment. One of them old and well-tried, but a little worm-eaten and at last worn out, the other made from such poorly seasoned wood that it has snapped while still almost new. It is very awkward indeed that they have given way together, Christianity and Rationalism, for new props of any sort are hard to find.

Notoriously, the search is encouraging a subjective interest in religion in unexpected places. Mr. Howells is an American professor of anthropology, but of physical and not social anthropology, so that he is here writing outside his special subject. The publishers' references to his "almost cynically utilitarian view of religion" and to "a peppery, scholarly, sprightly and unexpectedly provocative book" prepare one for a display of the superficial rationalism that still persists, and, in the face of absolute mystery, recalls a boy with a peashooter sniping the stars. *The Heathens* is saved from being that kind of book by the fact that the motive for writing it has plainly been to expose and comment upon our own predicament. Mr. Howells claims that he has approached primitive religion like a bird-watcher with a notebook, but this is not really so: his attitude is that of the sociologist and psychiatrist. He is interested in religion as some people are now interested in art, for its therapeutic uses. Valuable psychological and social benefits have been lost with religion, but it must be accepted that they have gone beyond recall; with science so coldly destructive and philosophy so difficult what is to be done? He can only sadly recognise that his "whole book should show that the atheist's victory is everybody's defeat."

The reasons put forward for accepting the catastrophic effect of atheism are entirely utilitarian. In a free and sometimes racy style Mr. Howells sets out to convince his readers (and it seems that the idea must be more difficult for an American than for the more primitive European) that "the religious practices of an uncivilised people" are not "a disorderly set of superstitious habits, but a framework of dovetailed institutions. Religious ideas help in the struggle for existence as verily as a bow and arrow . . ."

The first part of the book, dealing with men and the material world, shows how the intricate restrictions of group and individual liberty imposed by taboos encourage self-discipline and a sense of social responsibility; how the belief that there are witches offers a splendid means of expression to neurotic individuals, while an acceptance of both witchcraft and demons provides for society in general an outlet for those emotions that with us may give rise to such hysterias as anti-Semitism. Similarly, shamans, men and women who are able to pass at will into the spirit world, are generally unbalanced types akin to artists in civilised society. Not, as Mr. Howells concedes, that it is necessary to think that "every artist must have bats in his belfry," but they do tend to be individuals who are "goaded by their dissatisfaction at being somewhat maladjusted socially." So the artist paints or harmlessly writes poetry, while the shaman goes into a trance or frenzy, and both are relieved of their dissatisfaction.

In its second part, *The Heathens* passes to men and the invisible world—that is to say to religious phenomena in the strict, Frazerian, sense. This invisible world is "the real core of the majority of tribal religions, because around it is formed the public cult which explains the universe and the tribe, and the relation between them." A chapter on ancestor worship contains an admirable account of the beliefs and practices of the West African Bakongo people. Their worship of the good ancestral spirits gives the tribe cohesion, and the individual a sense of purpose; they see themselves with the unborn and the dead as "all one clan which marches through time like a parade . . . the dead are simply those who have passed a point which the living are still approaching."

The social value of this sense of continuity, and of unity with both nature and the unseen world is the theme also of the discussion of totemism and the gods. The subtlety and complexity occasionally achieved by primitive peoples in the mythology of their high gods is illustrated by the Ga and Dahomeans of Africa and above all by the Polynesians whose myths are comparable to those of the classical cults.

All this is exceptionally well done so far as it goes, but the utilitarian limitations of the book have led to the avoidance of the higher symbolisms, all those things that cannot be made into sound, instinctive alternatives to psychiatry. Mr. Howells does not touch on kingship or coronation ceremonies, on the seasonal and fertility rites of death and resurrection, nor does he attempt any serious interpretation of the ideas underlying sacrifices and sacraments. He says that although he does not want "to push past whole volumes of Frazer in a paragraph" he is sure that these matters are only special rituals of minor importance in religious development. It is doubtful if this is a sound supposition for a book that goes so far into the "unseen world" as this one has done in its consideration of totemism, ancestor worship and the high gods. This argument leads to the neglect of one of the strongest links between primitive and "civilised" religions, a link which must be of concern for the development of the author's main theme. This neglect is, of course, the result of a contemporary habit of mind that allows objective reality to psychological but not to metaphysical assumptions.

"Can civilisation retain enough of the supernatural to constitute a base for religion?" Mr. Howells asks. Why this isolation of a supernatural category? Does the word mean more than something beyond present modes of thought, and would

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LORD LINLITHGOW'S STATEMENT

The 113th annual general meeting of the Midland Bank Limited was held in London on Feb. 11.

The following are extracts from the statement by the Chairman, the Most Hon. the Marquess of Linlithgow, K.G., K.T.:

The statement begins with a survey of long-term trends in world economic relations, designed to bring to light any major changes in governing ideas concerning monetary arrangements. The conclusion is reached that the outcome of international schemes now operating or projected, including the European Recovery Programme, must be determined finally by the success achieved in the various countries in establishing a sound internal economy, well grounded on a balanced external position. If, then, our own country is to play its full part in projects for the upbuilding of a lasting structure of world economic relations, we need to look to ourselves and see whether we are making such progress as we might in putting our own economy in good and secure order.

MONETARY CONDITIONS IN GREAT BRITAIN

The statement continues: Perhaps the very first requirement for lasting health in the economic system is a sound currency, by which I mean a currency whose purchasing power is securely established and zealously protected. No one was satisfied a year ago that the risk of inflation had been overcome. The budgetary measures then adopted were specifically designed to combat the previous trend; and, while the evidence provided by price index numbers, statistics of production, trade turnover, stocks and so forth is not wholly consistent or conclusive, it does indicate a probability that, for the time being at least, inflationary forces have been brought under more effective restraint. In studying the signs and portents, however, it has been a matter for remark in the Press and elsewhere that no "disinflationary" movement is perceptible in banking figures; on the contrary, expansion continued during 1948. It does not follow that the peril of inflation has been brought nearer, that inflationary pressure on the market for goods and services has increased, or that the effort to arrest former unhealthy tendencies has failed.

Indeed, there are indications to the contrary, and certainly the banks supported by the express desires of the Treasury, have conducted their lending operations with the greatest care to guard against the use of credit for unhealthy, inflationary purposes. On the other hand, while the expansion of bank deposits is not in itself evidence of inflationary pressure or a breakdown of the disinflationary effort, it does suggest, along with other evidence, that the time has by no means come for relaxing effort to combat the basic inflationary elements in the situation.

ART OF MANAGEMENT

The position in industry, and indeed throughout the economic system, is such as to call for the highest standards of skill, judgment and resourcefulness in management. Hence one of the encouraging features of our time is to be seen in the close attention and systematic study which are now being given, both in public service undertakings and in private business, to developing the art and practice of management.

On many of the problems of management only people with a close knowledge of the circumstances of the particular industry are qualified to offer suggestions; but there is one question, of major import for the efficient conduct of nationalised undertakings, which is of general concern. This has to do with the functions of Parliament in its capacity—new and extraneous to the purpose for which it was designed—as representative of the public interest in state-owned businesses.

Clearly, maximum freedom from Parliamentary intervention must be accorded to those conducting the day-to-day affairs of the undertaking, but it is much more difficult to draw the line in matters of major policy. There is little indication so far that Parliament can make room in its crowded time-table for full debate on the material presented to it by nationalised undertakings, and some system of delegated examination may have to be evolved.

The problems I have mentioned make it evident that recent experiments in administration have by no means reached completion, and one is forced to the conclusion that it would have been better if they had been spread over a longer period. If only on the ground of excessive haste, the introduction of the Steel Bill must be regarded as in every way untimely and ill-conceived.

it not be reasonable to think that behind all the fantasies of primitive and civilised religions, even among the bats in the belfrys of shamans and artists, there might be some faint intimation of matters still far beyond our grasp? As Jane Harrison noticed, "a poet will forecast dimly what a later discovery will confirm."

This book can and should be read in two ways. As a fluent and very capable account of the value of certain aspects of primitive religions and their significance for ourselves, and as documentary evidence for the anxieties of Western, and particularly of American, civilisation. There the old man huddles, staring at the ruins and into the jungle, trying to use a rationalism that has already betrayed him to interpret the religion that it has destroyed.

JACQUETTA HAWKES

THE HIGHER TOSH

Tales Out Of School. By GEOFFREY TREASE. *Heinemann.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

This book will give food for thought to the conscientious teacher and the anxious parent, worried over Digby's eighth re-reading of *With Bible and Bayonet* (a happy invention by Mr. Trease) and wanting to get him on to Something Better. Mr. Trease has reviewed succinctly, and sometimes wittily, the literature read by British children during the last hundred years. The field is immense and Mr. Trease is not a dispassionate recorder, as was Mr. E. S. Turner in his admirable *Boys Will Be Boys.* There is much that worries him, particularly the lack of relationship between the facts (accurate) and the stimulus (healthy) of the classroom, and the unreality, the false excitements and the poor English of some of the tales read out of school.

Mr. Trease is himself a writer of children's books and he has a good eye for the kind of writing at which he is aiming. In the historical story "eminent writers . . . continue to pepper their books with 'I joy me,' and even 'Wot you what?' while Carola Oman, in *Ferry the Fearless,* makes the worst of both worlds in a remark like 'I am not in a great hurry, if you truly desire aught, but I think I ought to be turning home now'." He has unearthed an admirable headmistress in Grace Pettman's *The Queensgate Mystery* who gets a nasty shock when stalking down the smugglers' secret passage:

> Her nostrils were assailed by a pungent odour—not of night-scented stock or evening primrose, but the smell of something she hated like poison . . . In laboratory work and in such Social Service as had come her way, Miss Cambridge had become more or less familiar with the unmistakable reek of alcohol. Brandy? Gin? Which was it? She hated the reek of them all.

The effect of tosh upon the growing mind can be exaggerated and one of Mr. Trease's faults is that he grinds his axe exceeding fine. He wants children's books to be "socially valuable"; he would even like an occasional fictional divorce ("lightly handled") inserted to keep the young readers abreast of the times. He dislikes coincidences and "lucky improbability" which brings about the happy ending:

> Legacies are left with a profusion rare, alas, in our own experience. Lost and stolen articles are restored to grateful owners. Services are rendered and richly rewarded. In so far as all such plots encourage day-dreams of easy money they are bad; when they involve crossword prizes they are worse.

This is going a little too far. There is much to be said for the day-dreams of childhood (and for preserving as many as possible through adult life) and one is appalled at the kind of story that meets with Mr. Trease's approval:

> Lorna Lewis's *Feud in the Factory* is noteworthy for several reasons. For one thing it gives a vivid picture of industrial life, which is unusual. It starts off by eliminating the parents in traditional style, though the method (an air-raid) was realistic and topical when the story was published. . . This is a book of contemporary real life, about adolescent girls who smoke rather sooner than their elders approve, put on plenty of lip-stick and knock back a glass of cider or two at the Works dance.

It is perhaps fortunate that realism and topicality do not tell us what might befall these creatures after the third glass.

Mr. Trease ends with various pleas ("To You—For Action") and refers to the "shocking lack" of "expert reviewing" of children's stories. "If *Alice in Wonderland* and *Treasure Island* were to be published this year, scarcely one paper would give them a paragraph apiece. . . We need better reviewing at once; longer reviews as paper supplies allow." The latter sentence may well be true, but if the stories are to be the severely pruned and grimly realistic tales of his choice, Mr. Trease might find some of those reviews a paragraph too long.

ARTHUR MARSHALL

The Royal Family of Bayreuth. By FRIEDELIND WAGNER (with PAGE COOPER). *Eyre & Spottiswoode.* 15*s.*

Grand-daughter of Richard Wagner (to whom she bears a strong facial resemblance, and from whom perhaps she inherits a certain stubborn indocility) and great-grand-daughter of Liszt, Friedelind Wagner tells a story which can hardly fail to fascinate any reader sensitive to the romantic aura of the Bayreuth circle. Her father, Siegfried Wagner, was nearly 30 years older than his English wife, Winifred; and the four blond little Wagners of the third generation occupied a nursery next door to the upstairs drawing-room in which Cosima lay all day on her sofa, 90 years old, blind, but pleased with the prattle of her grandchildren as they "played doctor" over her body. Soon, another character enters the story: a skinny young man in Bavarian costume whom the children knew as "Wolf" and the world as Adolf Hitler. Hitler was just "one of Winnie's enthusiasms," who failed to impress the level-headed Siegfried; but in 1930 first Cosima and then Siegfried died, the Wagner Festival passed into Winifred's control, and from 1933 onwards Bayreuth began to lose its artistic status and to become a rallying ground and exhibition stadium for the Nazis. This part of the book, with its never-ending musico-political intrigue, reminds the reader of Berta Geissmar's *The Baton and the Jackboot.* Friedelind Wagner had always been the problem child of the family, and during these years the hostility between her and her Hitler-infatuated mother grew rapidly more bitter, until in 1940, with the help of Toscanini (whom she regards as her second father) she made her escape to the United States, by way of Switzerland, England and South America. Her book has no literary distinction, but is full of curious and often amusing episodes told with the vivacity natural to her independent and irreverent spirit.

Week-end Competitions

No. 991

Set by William Salter

Mr. Wilfrid Pickles visits any famous London Club and invites one or two members to "have a go." Competitors are invited to write the dialogue in not more than 150 words. Entries by February 22nd.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 988

Set by Naomi Lewis

The usual prizes are offered for an extract from a *Brief Life* by John Aubrey of any eminent Victorian or Edwardian. Limit 150 words.

Report by Naomi Lewis

Reproaches about the difficulties of obtaining an Aubrey have been accepted with humility. Still, in the entries I did receive from well-equipped competitors I hoped to find more of the inspired irrelevance and brilliant flashes of observation that bring Aubrey's notes to life, based as they are on picturesque rumour, captious memory, and unabashed personal comment on appearance and habits. "He had a delicate, lively hazel eie. Dr. Harvey tolde me it was like the eie of a viper." "Old Sir Francis lived like a hog, at Hownstret in Somerset." "My idea very cleer," he noted of himself; "phansie like a mirrour, pure chrystal water which the least wind does disorder and unsmooth." Butler's Alfred (as one competitor demonstrated) would have provided Aubrey with ideal material. Terence Melican has the right kind of anecdote in his *Ronald Firbank*.

> . . . He was very excellent companie for a few but could not endure the mob. His opinions were ever rare and outrageous. (He beleevd in fairies, quaere). One making slighting reference to his grandsire, that he was but an ignorant cobbler and cd not read, he straightway took him to law; yet he knew the observation to be just. (This I heard from Ld. Berners.).
>
> He died strangely, refusing to have a friende who called on him showne into his chamber (he lay at an inn) for fear the patterne of the wall-hangings should offend him. I cannot find where he is entombed.

But the more illustrious and dignified the sitter, the more curious is the Aubrey portrait. Home, for instance, a character whom Aubrey might have invented, is not really so good a subject as Gladstone or Tennyson or Doctor Arnold. Prizes of a guinea each are awarded to A. A., L. E. J., R. J. P. Hewison, J. D. K. Lloyd, and of half a guinea each to W. H. P. and Fergie. Honorable mentions: Terence Melican, Allan M. Laing, Gertrude Pitt, John Grant, Guy Kendall, Robert Gaffikin.

SAMUEL BUTLER

He was a most rare witt, something paradoxicall. He went to the Antippodes, and 'tis said (hostile) he got topsy-turvy there (*scilicet* in his *Erewhon* they punish sickness). I have forgott whether 'twas he that first said Our Saviour was taken alive from the Crosse; I think yea.

He was an incomparable *dilettante*. Would be a limner when young, but crosst in this by his father. He did his own picture many times. Mr. Jones says, to save paying for a moddel.

I have heard his manservant say ('twas cast at large upon the air, 3rd Prog.; *quaere* Mr. Stephen Potter if they will doe it again) when he lay dying, 190–, was pestered by a nurse, that would have her pleasure of him, gets upon his bed etc. He was of midling stature, dark hair; great black eiebrows like Robey the player; perhaps he begott Robey.

A. A.

MR. CHARLES KINGSLEY

". . . He had a leane habit of body, pale, with a greate nose, and stumbled in his speeche. He writ a sarcasticall pamphlett against Mr. Newman [him that afterwards gott a scarlett Hatt too late for enjoyement. Quaere: was the Cardinal Manning his enemie in this?] but hadd little good by it, for Mr. N. (whose House hadd been Oriel) was too ingeniose for his downerightness and did baffle him for all he had the right in it. I have heard his brother saie: "Charles gott but a bloudy wounde for his pains."

Named Canon of Westminster [Quaere: was he beholden to the Queen's Majestie?] but gott no preferment being a friend to the Naturall Philosophie of Mr. Darwin which is ill fare *stomacho episcopali*. He hadd greate skill to take fish with a rodd. I have seen him writ downe bloudthirstie but have forgott where. *Scripsit* . . ."

L. E. J.

ANTHONY TROLLOPE (1815–1882)

Natus Aprilis 24to 1815 *Londini* Anthony Trollope, a notable clarke in the generall post office and copious writer. Had his Father's irascibilitie (which putt-off the Attorneys from brieffing him) and his Mother's readie penn (whereby shee got their bread).

Anno 1834 gott his Place, where he shugged it miserably enough untill removed into Ireland, where prospering in business hee commenced besides that course of writing whereby he supputated to have got above 80,000 *li*.

A huge, heavie man, sangwin, cholerick, with bushie beard and fyerie eie. Enduring to sit hard to it, most of his Bookes written while keeping his place. Left this *circiter* 1866, vext at missing the reversion of Sir Jno. Tilley's place, *demisso* Sir R. Hill (the pennie post man). A man to rouze him 5h. manè ½h., writt his stint by pockett watch.

Venator (*scil.* fox-chaser) *acerrimus*.

Dec. 1882 *obiit apoplectus* at Harting *in com. Sussex*. (*Quaere* his epitaphe).

R. J. P. Hewison

LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS

Natus An: Dom: 1870, *die* . . . *mens* . . .

POETA—*sed magis ipso judice quam consensu aliorum.* Hath writt . . .

In youth, amicus, Oscaris Wilde, (paederastes). Quaere of that saucy billet to O.W. sent by My Lord, his father? Of this friendship came, after Mr. W's death (he is saide, fama vulg: to lie beneathe Sphinxes in Lachaise in Paris) a sort of protractique brawl 'twixt Mr. O his friends (R.R., F.H., etc.): then 'twas "Thou liest" and "Thou liest," and calling of "Judas"—a thing infinitely tedious to the Witts of this generation.

Of a tall stature, waterie eie, mouth weake: had been, tempore Victoriae Reginae, of a softe beautie—but hee was a Romantique, and could not forget his Youthe.

Quaere of Mr. A. Wood of his controversie with H. Belloc (of the makinge of those rimes—prioritie in composition etc).

A true Scott: litigious. Considered the Worlde his enemie, and soe made it.

J. D. L. Lloyd

WILLIAM GLADSTONE

Natus 1809. A man greatly skill'd in rhetoric. 'Tis sayd all would listen to his discourse; though for as many as held it in favour, an equal number found it of great offence. I have heard he was in high disfavour with the Queen (*quaere* Lord Beconsfield). At one time he sat in parlement. A man of great practicall parts. I am told he had great skill as a woodsman. He devised an ingeniose case to take on his travells. In fashion he excelled; he wore neckbands of his own devising. My father had never met a man with neck so stiffe. For his lustiness at sports many called him GOM (*quaere*). He had some taste for necromancy and soothsaying. Anno 18— (*quaere*) made a portentous prophesie (*qua* Sibyl); (*vide*). Henry Labouchere told me that at cardes divine spirits would make appear fresh cardes from his sleeves and clothing. Dyed at Hawarden.

W. H. P.

MR. HOME

I have heard that once Mr. Home was sent for by a priest who would have him forswear all commerce with ghosts and feries. O says Mr. Home, tis they must forswear me,-they do as they list. With that there were some loud bangs in the air and some twangling as of instruments, but nothing seen, save a smoke as of incense, and like nard, but sweeter. The priest very pale asks was that you banged but now? Not I, says Mr. Home, whereat more bangs, and the priest to his prayers, and so with bangs and prayers some half-hour. Then the bangs ceasing and the priest his own man again, well, says he, we heard nothing, for if it could not have happened, it did not happen; wherein men of sense uphold him to this day.

Fergie

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